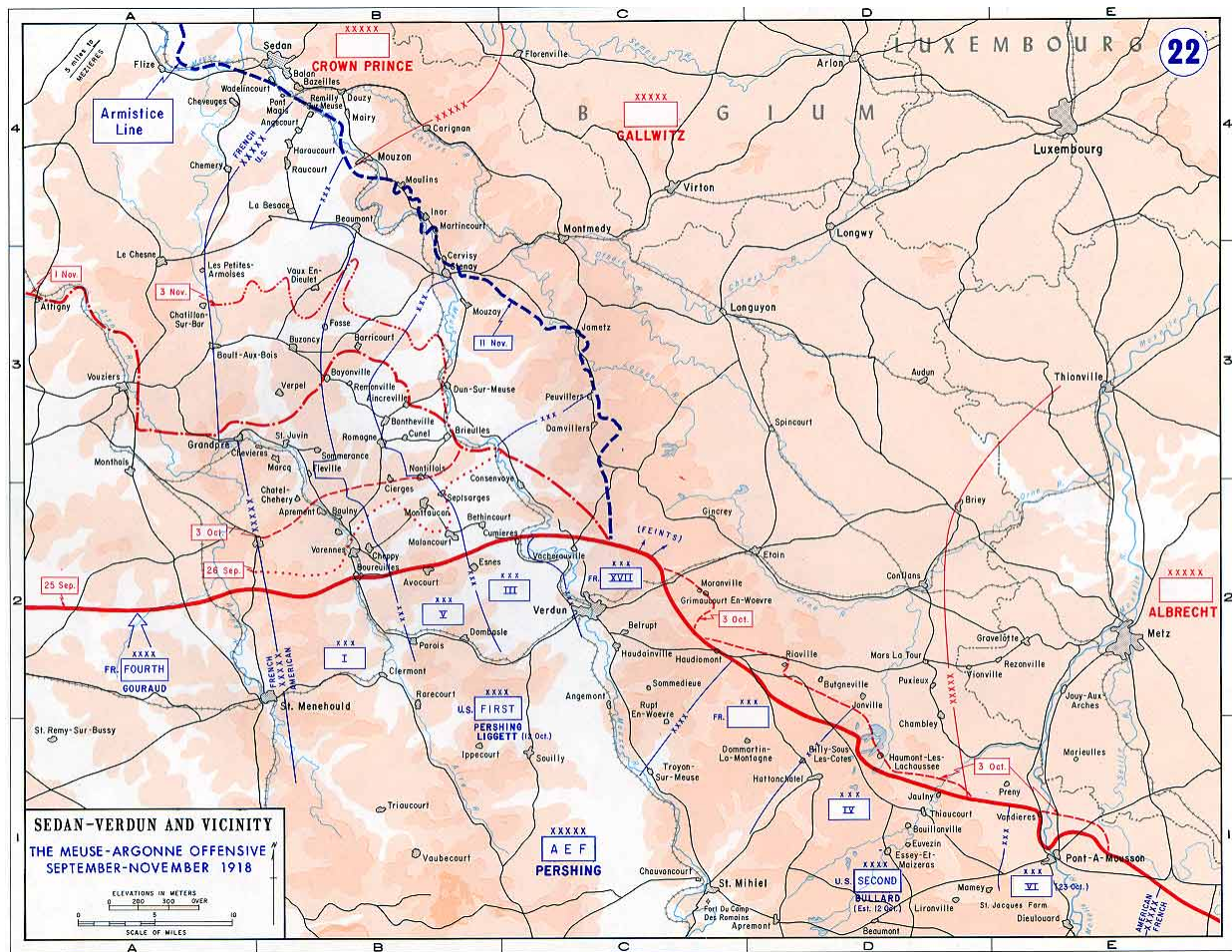


THE FIRST WORLD WAR,
THE LIGHTNING DIVISION
AND
PRIVATE ALBERT MATELENA



BRIAN A. SMITH, D.C.

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INTRODUCTION

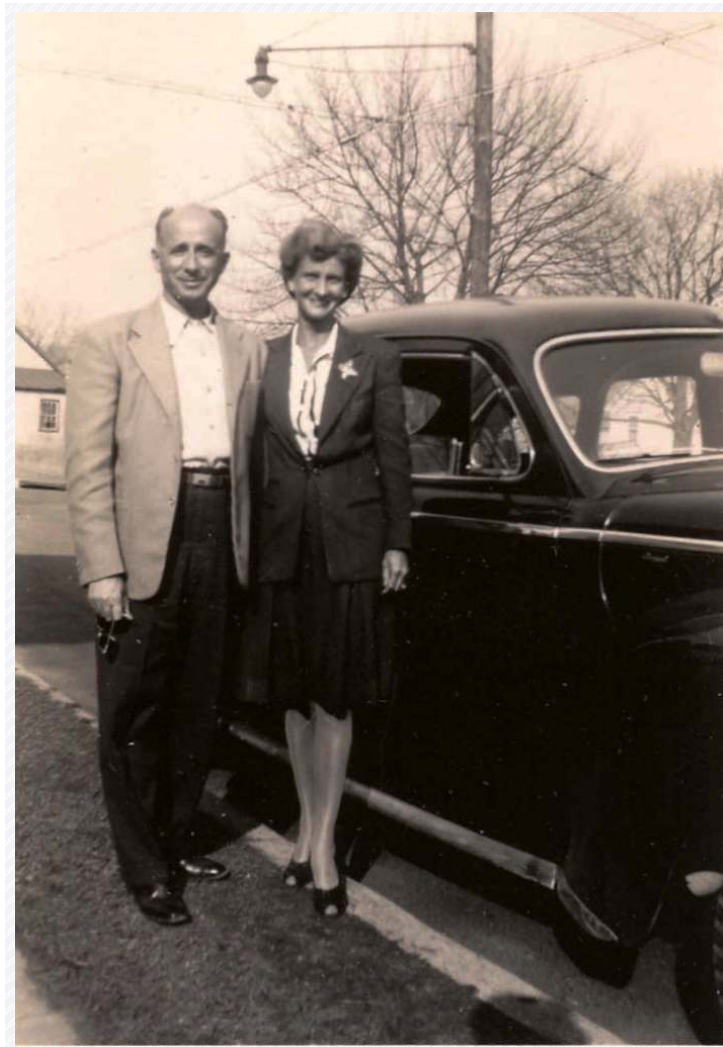
I have many memories of growing up in the suburbs of Trenton, New Jersey, some vague while others are as clear as if they happened only yesterday. One memory in particular has always stood out, for reasons unknown. There were at least four people present: my mother Alberta, her father Albert, my younger sister Melissa and me. My grandfather had always loomed large in my life despite his short stature; he was just 5' 4" tall. He was the five pound coconut-filled Easter egg every year; he was the man with the funny moustache that you could rub off with your fingers; he was the flashy dresser with the latest model automobile; he was Grandpop Matelena. It was late spring 1969 and I was about to be ten-years old and Missy had just turned three. Grandpop sat on a chair facing away from our kitchen table in our postwar tract home. He held my sister on his left knee and I was standing next to them with my mother leaning against the sink. He was running his right hand over his bald dome of his head and, alternately, pointing to a doorknob and said *"You know why my head is like that doorknob? I lost my hair because I was gassed in the war."* End of memory. During the twenty-two years that I shared this planet with my grandfather, that single comment was the only indication that he had fought in one of the worst battles known to this day.

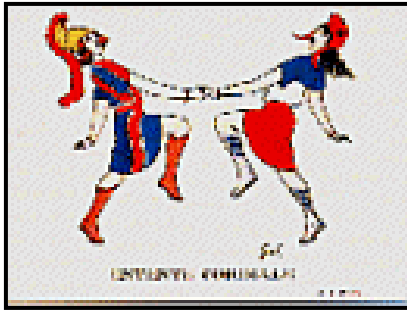
Almost half of his grandchildren, five out of eleven, were my family: two brothers, two sisters and me; I was number nine. Our relationship with him was more formal than that of my cousins, or so it appears in hindsight. Over the course of years as family get-togethers dwindled in number and increased in importance, I found that he interacted with my cousins much more than he did with us. It was not a conscious choice but one of deference. He had come to visit his youngest daughter, his "favorite" according to her two sisters, not with us. His "Mutchie" as he called her; the teenager who went to Sunday Mass every week with his own mother; the outgoing, fun-loving, beautiful one that played the piano, washed the family dog and was a cheerleader; the one with the difficult start in her married life; and just "Mom" to us.

He lived with one of my Aunts and, understandably, was on a much more informal basis with the four cousins that he lived with, yet the remaining two cousins, brothers, each have stories about him that demonstrate a greater degree of familiarity, a greater ease in his presence than I found in our home. Perhaps that reserved quality had something to do with the devastating effect of the death of his wife nine years earlier had on my mother; perhaps they always had a reserved, if not strained, relationship. For whatever reason, I never considered myself "close" to him while he was alive. After many years which included a visit to the small town in southern Italy that his parents called home, discovering the places they lived in New York City in the 1890s, going to Our Lady of Mount Carmel Roman Catholic Church on East 116th Street where he was baptized; following the path took by the 78th Division of the US Army in the fall of 1918 and uncovering history for this article, I have come to know my grandfather much more intimately.

Dedication

*This is dedicated to Umberto Giuseppe Maddalena,
born in Manhattan on the 5th of February, 1896;
his wife Dorothy Ruth Southard,
born in Bordentown, New Jersey on the 17th of January, 1907;
and all of their descendants.*





TREATIES AND ALLIANCES CAN **WORK TOO GOOD**

The European Alliance system had been developing since 1879 and had maintained a system of checks-and-balances on the Continent for thirty-five years. The Triple Alliance: Germany, the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Italy opposed the Triple Entente: Britain, France and Russia, created by the *Entente Cordiale* in 1904 and 1907. All this would change on the 28th of June 1914, when the Habsburg Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his morganatic wife, the Duchess of Hohenberg, were assassinated in Sarajevo. Czarist Russia, an ally of Serbia, became the immediate focus when Germany declared war on Russia on the 1st of August followed by Austria-Hungary's declaration against Russia on the 6th. The system worked like clockwork and countries fell into war like dominoes. Germany declared war on France on 3 August 1914; Britain followed with its own declaration against Germany the following day; and both powers declared war on the Habsburg monarchy on the 12th of August.

Italy remained neutral for the first year of the conflict. In 1915, Italy allied itself with the Entente and suffered a devastating defeat at the hands of the Austro-Hungarian armies the following year. The powers had been preparing for war for many years: the Germans had "The Schlieffen Plan" drawn up by Count Alfred von Schlieffen in 1905 while France had their "Plan XVIII." Put into action, the plans dovetailed together to such a great extent that France was almost defeated at the outset. As the armies of France advanced into Germany on a northeastern arc, those of Germany overran Belgium on their way to France in a southwestern arc. After successfully repelling the advance just outside of Paris, the Western front was established; the French government returned to its capital; and the beginning of the worst conflict in history got underway in earnest.

The Alliance system worked quite well, too well in fact. Both sides were quite evenly matched, resulting in a war that neither could easily win. The world had yet to witness a war that would drag on for years without interruption; no government was prepared to conduct such a war; millions would perish while the Western front held steadfast, never varying more than ten miles in either direction.

The Triple Entente

King George V



King Emanuele III



President Poincaré



King Albert I



President Wilson



Almost three years of fighting would pass before the American forces entered the war on 6 April 1917. Forced into action after Germany decided to continue unlimited submarine warfare, the United States entered the war as an “associate” of France and Britain, not an ally. The American forces would be led by Major-General John J. Pershing. His counterparts included General Douglas Haig, Commander of the British Expeditionary Forces (BEF) and General Henri Philippe Petain who became the French Commander-in-Chief in 1917. In the sequel to this war, Petain would lead the Vichy government of France from 1940 to 1944 and work closely with his former enemies, the German Third Reich. The Commanders-in-Chief of Italy and Belgium were also its’ leaders, King Vittorio Emanuele III and King Albert I, much like our own President being Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Armed Forces. Most Italian military affairs were handled by the King’s Chief-of-Staff who was appointed by the Prime Minister. Luigi Cadorna served in this role for the first part of the war and was replaced by the appointment of Armando Diaz in October 1917. Under Diaz, Italy enjoyed their most notable victory: the destruction of the Austro-Hungarian Army at Vittorio Veneto in October 1918.

These military leaders had to work with, or often against, their nations’ political leaders: Britain had King George V who changed his German-derived surname of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha to Windsor, providing his cousin the German Emperor with material for humor as Willem II exclaimed he wanted to see Shakespeare’s *Merry Wives of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha*! The British Prime Minister was David Lloyd George, while Georges Clemenceau was his French counterpart, serving under President Raymond Poincaré. The King of Italy was Vittorio Emanuele III and the Prime Minister for the first two years of the war was Antonio Salandra, followed by Paolo Boselli for one year and Vittorio Orlando through, and past, Armistice. Belgium was led, like Italy, by a commander-in-chief, King Albert I. Woodrow Wilson was President and his Secretary of the War Department was Norman D. Baker while its’ Chief of Staff was Major-General Peyton C. March.

The first unit of the First (U.S.) Division landed in France on 26 June 1917. Only 4 American divisions were in France by the spring of 1918: First, Second, Twenty-Sixth and Forty-second, totaling approximately 112,000 men. Within the short span of a few months, this number soared to 1,760,000 as 42 wholly-American divisions arrived on French soil. (See Appendix 1 for American Forces organization). The Americans outnumbered the combined forces of both sides of the war as the Allied forces numbered half of this and the Imperial forces were only one-third.

The Triple Alliance

The specter of a German victory loomed large as hostilities ended on the Eastern front, allowing for a drastic increase in manpower for the armies on the Western front. The toppled Czarist government was replaced by the Directorate in St. Petersburg who had promised "peace at any cost" to gain power and found the costs to be staggering.

The addition of tens of thousands of German soldiers for a massive spring 1919 offensive on the Western front spelled near-certain defeat. French soldiers had mutinied in large numbers and the Entente had suffered major defeats on every front early in 1918. President Wilson, a staunch supporter of a negotiated peace and American neutrality, when faced with the prospect of an Imperial victory, had little choice but to enter the war. The only problem was this: under what pretext could the United States declare war? The government had steadfastly refused to become embroiled in what was seen by many as a local dispute between Europe's antiquated royal houses. Imperial Germany blundered when it pursued a policy of submarine warfare without respect to neutrality. What was not anticipated was the sheer size of the U.S. forces since, in April 1917, the U.S. numbered seventeenth in armed force size, just behind Portugal.

The Triple Alliance operated along similar lines, though "Triple" is a misnomer as Italy removed itself from the Alliance based on treaty violations by Germany. The German Emperor was Friedrich Willem Viktor Albrecht or Kaiser Willem II of Prussia. Willem II was cousin to Czar

Emperor Willem II



Emperor Franz Josef I



Emperor Karl I



General Ludendorff



Paul von Hindenburg



Nicholas II and King George V. His great-grandson, Prince Georg Friedrich Ferdinand (born 1976) is the royal heir to the throne of Prussia and, as a descendant of Britain's Queen Victoria, 150th in line for the British crown! The Habsburgs ruled the Austro-Hungary Dual Monarchy in the person of Franz Josef I. His titles included Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary and King of Bohemia. In mid-nineteenth century Franz Josef was President of the German Confederation out of which was born the German Empire in 1871. Upon his death on 21 November 1916, he was succeeded by Emperor Karl I until Armistice Day, 11 November 1918, when he relinquished, not abdicated, the duties of throne. His son Otto Habsburg (born 1912) is current heir since 1922, despite renouncing all claims to the throne in 1961.



THE ALLIED HIGH COMMAND

Ceremony attending the induction of General Petain as Marshal of France. Metz, Dec. 18, 1918. (Front) Marshal Petain, Commander-in-Chief of the French Armies. (Left to Right) Marshal Joffre, First French Commander-in-Chief and hero of the Marne; Marshal Foch, Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Forces; Field Marshal Haig, Commander-in-Chief, British Expeditionary Forces; General Pershing, Commander-in-Chief, American Expeditionary Forces; General Gillain, Belgian Army Commander; General Albricci, Commander, Italian 2nd Corps; General Haller, Commander of the Polish Legion in France. (Rear) General Weygand, Chief of Marshal Foch's Staff.

The two Emperors' held little real power during the war. Power was centered on the *Oberste Heeresleitung* or Supreme Command, a military dictatorship lasting the duration of the war. General Erich Ludendorff was the German Quartermaster General and *de facto* commander of the Central Powers' armies, while the titular Commander was Field-Marshal Paul Ludwig Hans Anton von Beneckendorff und von Hindenburg. Hindenburg and Ludendorff led the Third Supreme Command that lasted from August 1916 to September 1918. Hindenburg would continue in politics as the second President of the postwar Weimar Republic from 1925 until his death on 2 August 1934. Hindenburg's name lives on from the disaster of the wreck of the *graf-zeppelin* bearing his name in Lakehurst, NJ in 1937; however it was his 1933 appointment of Adolf Hitler to the post of Chancellor that was his single most important act.

Ludendorff telegraphed his thoughts on Hitler's appointment to the Weimar President:

By appointing Hitler Chancellor of the Reich, you have handed over our sacred German Fatherland to one of the greatest demagogues of all time ...stop... I prophesy to you this evil man will plunge our Reich into the abyss and will inflict immeasurable woe on our nation ... stop... Future generations will curse you in your grave for this action ...stop

WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE



General John J. Pershing, Commander
American Expeditionary Forces

The First World War lasted over four years and was brought to a stunning close only through the massive operations of American forces during just the last ten weeks of the war leading up to the November 11th Armistice. The sheer magnitude of this unprecedented mass training and movement of troops overseas is unimaginable, as is the number of tactical blunders and unforeseeable obstacles that awaited the fresh recruits. But the fact remains, the entry of the American forces in September 1918 resulted in the complete defeat of the Imperial forces and the abdication of Kaiser Willem II and resignation of

Emperor Karl I within ten weeks, thus ending what the Entente forces could not do in the previous four years. Many within the Entente forces belittled or dismissed the import of this country's entry into the war, often with political gains in mind. The greater the contribution a country had in defeating Germany, the greater the rewards that would accrue to that country at treaty-signing time. Perhaps a more reliable opinion came from Germany's commander, Ludendorff, who stated succinctly "The American infantry in the Argonne won the war."

Belatedly realizing the need for better co-ordination and co-operation, the Entente created the Allied Supreme War Council in November 1917. Sir George, Clemenceau and Orlando, the Prime Ministers of Britain, France and Italy, respectively, hoped to gain more control of events from the military commanders. To afford the Supreme Council a stronger military base than could be achieved by the Prime Ministers as the sole controlling force, a Technical Advisory Council was created consisting of General Ferdinand Foch from France, General Sir Henry Wilson from Britain, the former Italian Chief-of Staff, General Luigi Cadorna and the Chief-of-Staff of the United States Army, Major-General Tasker M. Bliss. In this manner President Wilson retained a role for the U.S. in military decisions of the Council, while avoiding the political pitfalls. In the summer of 1918 the Allied Commander

in Chief, Marshal Ferdinand Foch, with strong backing of General Haig, Commander of the BEF, developed a plan that would, if successful, bring about the defeat of the German Imperial forces earlier than the prediction of 1919. A series of Entente successes in the spring and summer signaled that a massive offensive along the entire Western front, never before tried, could bring about the defeat of the Imperial Armies. In fact, every offensive since the failed German attack at Verdun in 1916 had occurred from Champagne north to Flanders, in part due to the difficult terrain from the Argonne Forest to the Swiss border. General Pershing immediately started planning for the creation of the American First Army, which was activated on 10 August 1918, with Pershing assuming the position of Commander on 30 August (while simultaneously being the Commander of the AEF). In September the American First Army attacked in the Lorraine region, the first time in history that American forces would be under the direct command of American officers in a foreign country.

THE LIGHTNING DIVISION

The 78th Division of the National Army "belonged" to New Jersey despite the order of the Provost Marshal General detailing its men coming from western New York and Delaware in addition to the Garden State. The 309th and 310th Infantry and 307th and 309th Artillery came from New York State as did the 303rd Engineers of Second Battalion. Delaware was the source of the Divisional Machine Gun Battalion while the men of New Jersey made up the 311th and 312th Infantry, 308th Artillery and First Battalions 303rd Engineers. The National Army divisions were formed to a large extent, along state lines and though other states may be represented, each division was associated with a single state usually. On the 28th of April in 1917 the Provisional Brigade of the 78th paraded on Broad Street in Philadelphia to garner support for the Third Liberty Loan drive. President Woodrow Wilson hailed from New Jersey and the 78th was called "The President's Own" Division at first. How the "Lightning Division" came to be has three stories: the first has "White Lightning" being suggested by ballot and approved by Major-General Scott; the second one makes mention of a "local" brew, commonly known as "white lightning" or "Jersey Applejack whiskey" while the third attributes the nickname to the rapidity with which the 78th made their advance during the St. Mihiel offensive which the French supposedly likened to a lightning bolt



MAJOR GEN. J. H. McRAE,
commanding 78th Division
of the Third Army Corps.

that seared the field through which it raced. It isn't difficult to date the first version as Hugh L. Scott was Major-General of the 78th for two brief periods: 2 January to 20 February 1918 and 24 February to 15 March 1918. As for the second version, since the locale of the "local" brew is not given, and it is doubtful that any brew in France would be called lightning or anything approximating that, the moniker would have been in place by May 1918. The third version requires that the 78th be called the "President's Own" until the end of September 1918. I have read many records and none refer to the division by this name, however all were written subsequent to the St. Mihiel offensive. While all are plausible, a combination of the first two makes sense: when asked about a name, the "ballot," the men suggested a name reflecting something near and dear to them – white lightning! The shoulder insignia of the division is a bolt of lightning on a red semi-circle. Here again we have a progressive story. The red semi circle was used for marking the baggage of the division. In France, lightning bolts were added to represent the Division's name. Originally it was three "bolts" of lightning, each bolt being made by single stitched jagged line. That design became the butt of many jibes: "A cat having a fit in a bottle of catsup" was a favorite. (See Appendix 3 for military insignia and Appendix 5 for military flags)



Led by Major-General James H. McRae, the 78th proved their abilities while training at the British front in August and in the Limey sector north of Toul in September. Commanding the 156th Brigade was Brigadier-General James T. Dean.

BASIC TRAINING

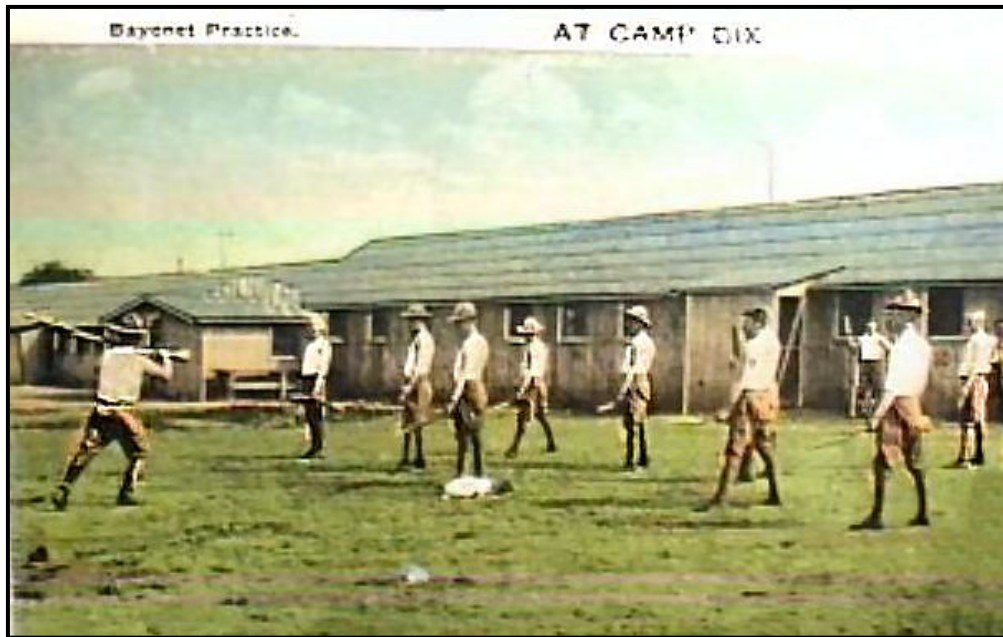
Training the masses of new recruits and draftees consisted of 16 weeks in basic warfare with an emphasis, misplaced in hindsight, on trench warfare. German trenches were designed to facilitate movements between the enormous amounts of artillery on the front line without placing the soldiers in jeopardy. The Germans had abandoned the stalemate-causing trench warfare in the spring and summer 1918 offensives. Upon arriving in France three more months of training ensued, in theory. This was divided into 3 sections: 1st phase was the instruction of small units; the 2nd phase was training in line, preferably in a quiet sector, brigaded with an experienced unit; and the final phase was spent correcting any uncovered



deficiencies in a training area and division-wide training as a unit in open warfare.

Camp Dix saw the first soldier arrive on June 1, 1917 from Company C, 1st Battalion, New Jersey Engineers. What had been the rolling farmlands of New Jersey, dotted with the occasional farmhouse was transformed into a city of 50,000 in three month's time. Complete with a railroad system, including freight houses, spurs, stations, etc., a full road system, water brought from eight miles away and distributed through more than 20 miles of mains, a fire department, police department, store houses for food, military equipment and clothes, bakeries, hospitals, shoe repair shops, clubs for entertainment, a movie theater and a library – in short, a city.

The first recruits to arrive in



quantity did so in September 1917.

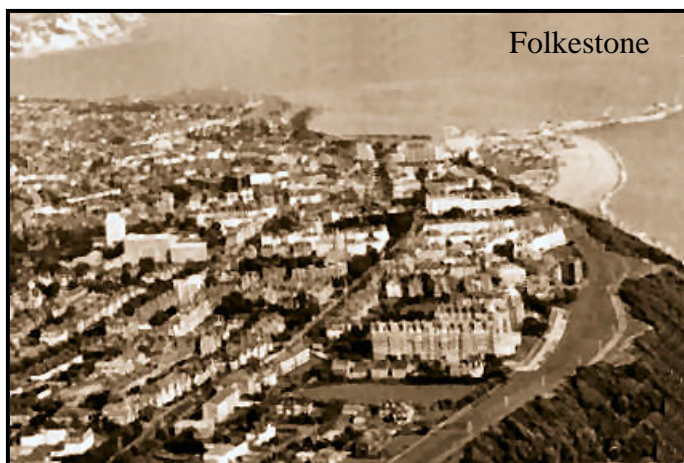
In addition to the military training, athletic competitions helped to create a sense of camaraderie that served the men well overseas.

The 311th participated in one of the first games that garnered wide-spread attention – their interdivisional football game against the 307th field artillery which ended in a 10 – 10 tie. Divisional champions then defeated the 76th from Camp Devens at Braves Field in Boston on November 17th and the 79th, 13 – 6, at Franklin Field in Philadelphia. Men from the 311th were a large percentage of the team in the latter game and the final play of the game found them on their own one-yard line. Four times the 79th tried to gain that yard, and four times they failed. The impenetrable wall of the 311th propelled the 78th to being the northeast interdivisional champions.

Track and basketball were also enjoyed over the winter months, with the 78th beating the Boston Navy Yard team at track in Madison Square Gardens, claiming the Army-Navy championship in January 1918. As winter changed to spring, the baseball diamond took shape at Camp Dix. Two leagues were formed and an extensive schedule developed while another change that foretold of a greatly-shortened baseball season.

Transfer to other units beginning in November 1917 had severely decimated the ranks of the 78th. Where once they were at capacity, they hovered near fifty percent of that in February 1918. The arrival of more weapons and more men filled out the training and the ranks. The British tank "Britannia" arrived in February and demonstrated its capabilities by running through some of the many farmhouses and barns that were all that remained to remind the men that the very freedoms we hoped to

Form 1 1477 REGISTRATION CARD		No. 146
1	Name in full (Last, first, middle initial) <u>Albert Joseph Matelson</u>	Initials <u>AM</u>
2	Home address (Street, city, state, and country) <u>101 E. 1st St. New York, N.Y.</u>	
3	Date of birth <u>July 5, 1896</u>	
4	Are you (1) a natural-born citizen, (2) a naturalized citizen, (3) an alien, (4) or have you declared your intention (specify which)? <u>Natural born</u>	
5	Where was you born? <u>New York, N.Y.</u>	
6	If not a citizen, what country are you a citizen or subject of?	
7	What is your present occupation? <u>Warehouseman</u>	
8	By whom employed? <u>Freight Dept. U.S. Army</u>	
9	Have you a father, mother, wife, child under 18, or a sister or brother under 18, solely dependent on you for support (specify which)? <u>Father, Mother</u>	
10	Sex (specify which)? <u>Male</u>	
11	What military service have you had? Branch <u>none</u> branch <u>none</u>	
12	Do you claim exemption from draft (specify which)?	
I affirm that I have verified above answers and that they are true. <u>Albert J. Matelson</u> (Signature in ink)		

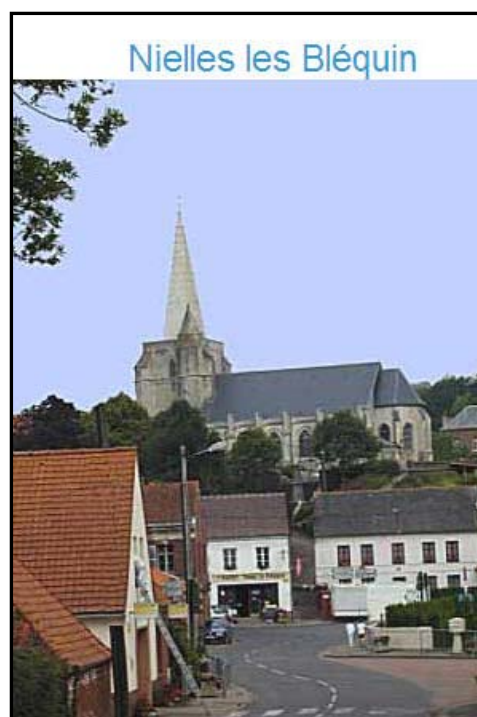


preserve overseas were not always so readily accessible at home. A twenty-two-year-old Albert Matelena was inducted on 12 February 1918 after registering in the first draft of 5 June 1917. On the 2nd of March, he had his entrance physical exam which reveals a height of just five feet, four inches and a weight of 135 pounds.

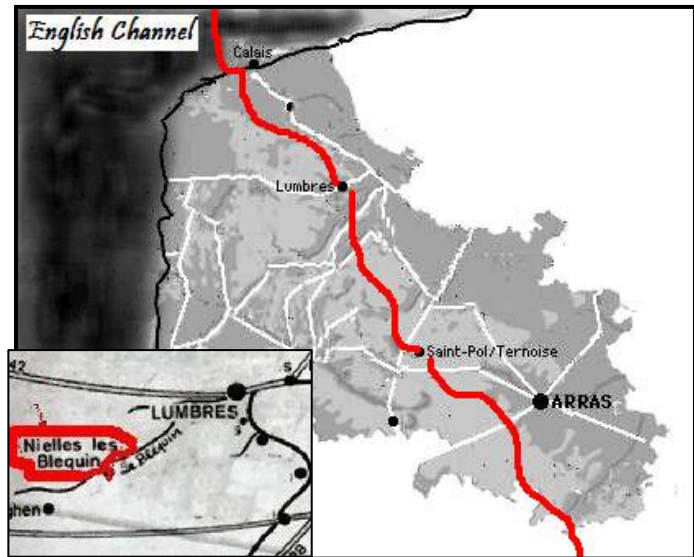
By May the ranks had filled out and basic training was completed. On the 6th of May an advance party of officers quietly left the camp; the order came placing the division under the Commanding General, Port of Embarkation, Hoboken; on the 17th the drills ceased and the base closed to visitors; in companies and regiments the troops quietly left camp on the 18th and 19th, some destined for Boston, others Philadelphia and the rest New York. The majority of the division reassembled in Halifax between the 23rd and 27th and, with a naval escort, seventeen transports headed across the Atlantic. Some faster ships sailed directly to England, bypassing Halifax. The S.S. *Beltana* carrying the 310th Infantry had a near-miss with a German submarine on the 2nd of June, coming within two hundred yards of it. Navy torpedo boats made short work of the sub.

Division headquarters, sailing on the *SS Northland*, along with the infantry landed in London, Liverpool and Southampton and made for Folkestone, England while the artillery headed directly to Le Havre. Many Jersey boys mentioned that Folkestone reminded them of Atlantic City, except for the distant roar of war. Soon they headed across the channel under the watchful eye of British and French destroyers, landing at Calais around the 8th and made for Rest Camps 5 and 6.

They moved by train to Marquise and marched to Nielles-lès-Bléquin where their training was continued as part of the Second (US) Army Corps while affiliated with the British 34th Division. The Northumberland Fusiliers, the 14th Highland Infantry and the 15th Royal Scots, as part of the British 39th Division, took over their training on June 17th. All were attached to the

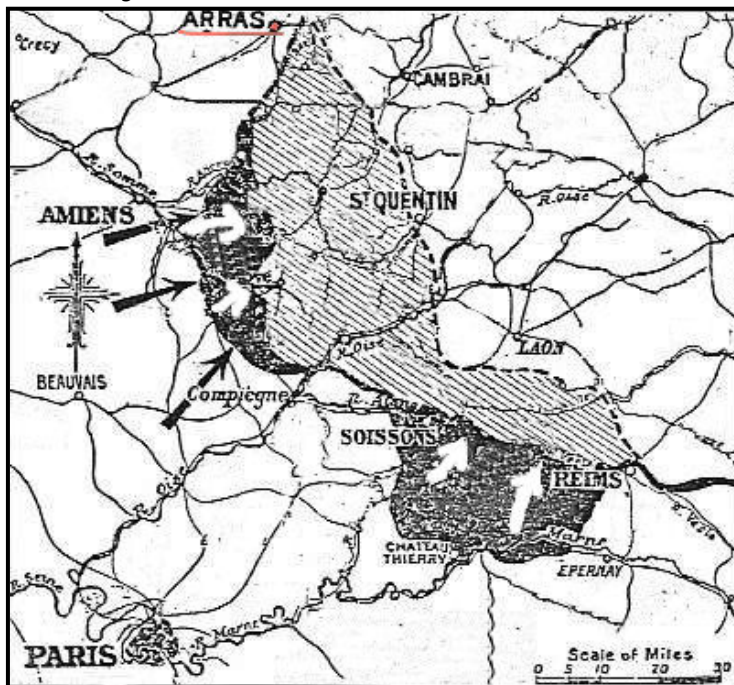


British Second Army until July 18th when the men were assigned to the British First Army and took up positions in the Saint Pol-sur-Ternoise area near Arras. The 156th Brigade took up a reserve position on the "G.H.Q. line" on the 5th of August. Ten days later, the 156th headed east, with the 155th following. The 78th completed the month-long second phase "training in line" during the Amiens Offensive, while attached to the British Fourth Army before the end of August.

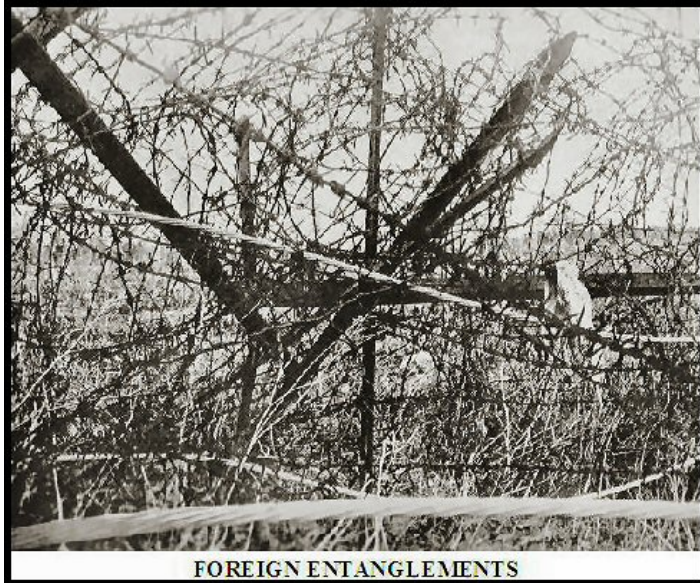


BRITISH FOURTH ARMY AND THE AMIENS OFFENSIVE

The Amiens Offensive began 8 August while the 78th was attached to this army as part of their training in front line maneuvers. Led by Canadian and ANZAC troops, the British Fourth and French First Armies dealt a decisive blow to the Germans on the first day. One so decisive that Ludendorff termed that date as the "Black Day" for the Imperial forces. Advancing ten miles the first day, the morale of the German Army was severely undermined which would have devastating effects in the near



future. Foch, apprised of the frame-of-mind of the Imperial forces was urged to make use of this fact by continuing to attack rather than encamping for the winter. The Amiens Offensive lasted until 4 September and resulted in Ludendorff and Hindenburgh directing the German government to sue for peace. While they may have been characterized as dictators, they were not; both were removed from office within the month.



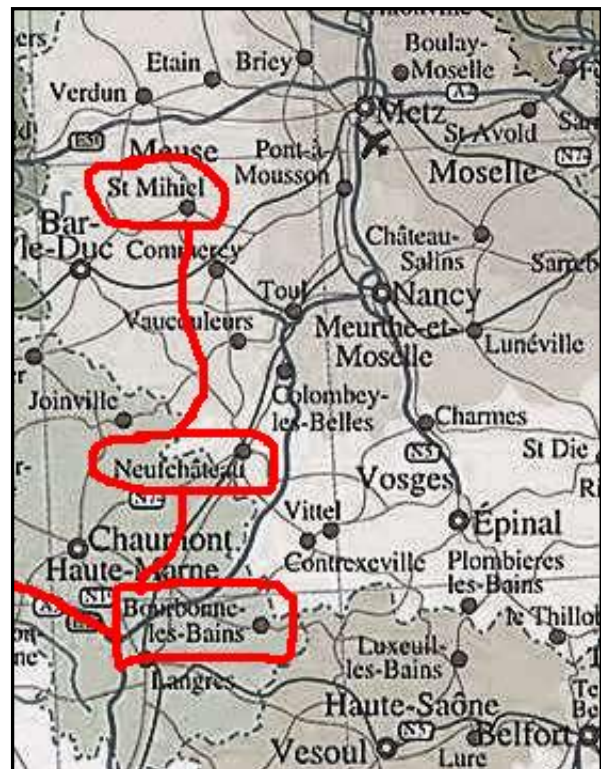
IMPERIAL DEFENSES: THE HINDENBURG LINE

The German front was called the *Hindenburg "line,"* though it was not a single line but rather a series of obstacles such as twenty to thirty yards of barbed wire protecting sited machine guns and an extensive trench system that ran all the way across the front of the First Army. The standard was to have three adjacent trenches,

or *Stellung*, facing the enemy across the entire front from the North Sea to Switzerland. These three were named after Wagnerian witches – *Giselher*, *Kriemhilde*, and *Freya*. The front, or first, line was sparsely occupied while the second line, placed beyond the known firing range of the enemy, contained the major defensive force. The third line, placed out of artillery range, had deep, covered bunkers and housed the reserve. The area between the trench lines, the so-called "no man's land," was defended by machine-gun pillboxes which were camouflaged and placed so as to protect the pillboxes on either side. In some areas, these standard three were supplemented with others as the defensive needs and geography dictated.

PREPARE FOR BATTLE

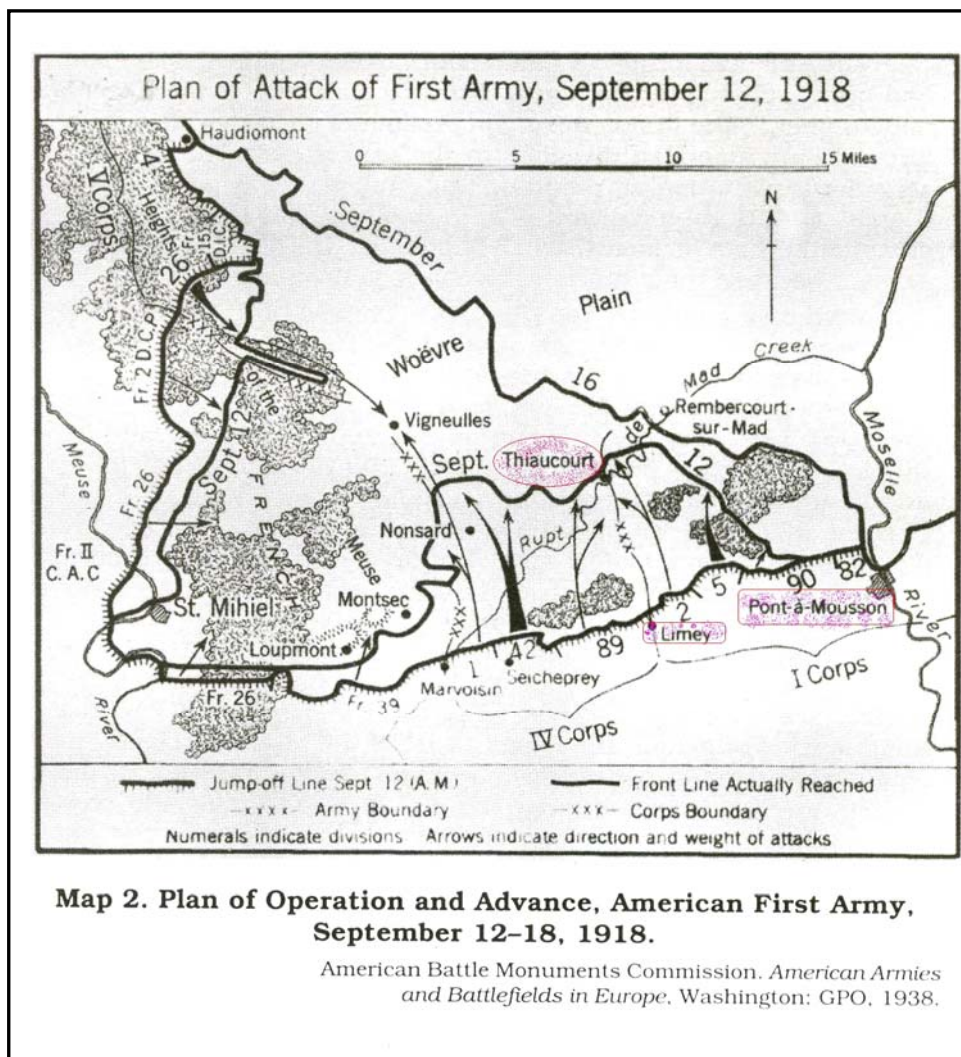
The third phase of overseas training was finished while assigned to the First (US) Army Corps. This final phase may have been slightly shortened as the 78th relieved the 2nd and 5th Divisions on the line in the Saint Mihiel Offensive on the 15th of September. An abbreviated third phase may have been due to necessity as fresh troops were in constant demand; due to the division's good



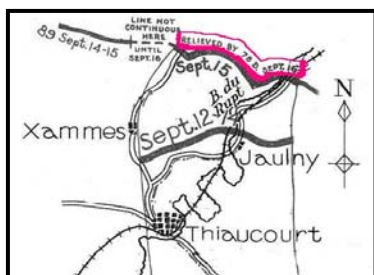
performance; or due to the rapid redeployment of forces necessitated by the unexpected Meuse-Argonne Offensive.

The 78th left the Amiens area on the 20th of August and traveled by train for two days to the 11th Training Area around Bourbonne-les-Bains; thence to the 3rd Training Area in Bourmont on the 28th, having been reassigned to First Army Corps three days earlier; from there to the 2nd Training Area in Neufchâteau after receiving orders to march at night to Chatenois, with most arriving there on the 6th of September. By the 10th they had marched to the Bois de la Côte-en Haye followed the next night by marching through mud and rain to the Bois de la Rappe for the 156th and to Bois de Greny for the 155th. They arrived just in time to witness the opening bombardment that lasted four hours.

ST. MIHIEL OFFENSIVE, **12 SEPTEMBER 1918**



The plan was to attack in such a manner as to push the *Hindenburg line* back to Metz, then to the Meuse River's bend to the west at Sedan. The American front, eighteen miles wide along the initial line of attack, would expand to forty miles wide by the time the Meuse River was reached. The First Corps under Major-General Hunter Liggett and Fourth Corps



led by Major-General Joseph C. Dickman attacked on 12 September 1918. The battle was virtually won by the following day, though fighting continued for almost two weeks. The German high command had decided to abandon the salient they had held for four years and were in retreat when the attack was launched. Prior to this the Germans had

strongly defended the area as the all-important railroad supply train crossed the area. Falling back to a much shorter front allowed the Germans to free up several divisions for use elsewhere.

The 156th moved closer to the Limey sector and Loge Mangin, near Thiaucourt on September 12th as part of 1st Corps. On the 13th and 14th they moved to the Bois d'Euvezin and the outskirts of Limey. The moment of arrival on the front lines comes from Corporal Eugene Kennedy of the 78th:

Thurs. Sept. 12th, 1918.

Hiked through dark woods. No lights allowed; guided by holding on the pack of the man ahead. Stumbled through and under brush for about half-mile into an open field where we waited in a soaking rain until about 10 pm.

We then started on our hike to the St. Mihiel Front arriving on the crest of a hill about 1am. I saw a sight which I shall never forget. It was the zero hour. In one instant the entire front as far as the eye could reach in either direction was a sheet of flame while the heavy artillery made the earth quake. The barrage was so intense that for a time we could not make out whether the Americans or Germans were putting it over. After timing the interval between flash and report we knew that the heaviest artillery was less than a mile away and consequently it was ours.

The orders finally came that had the 78th taking the front lines as an American unit in the American zone. The 155th was to relieve the 2nd Division on the 15th and 16th, followed by the relief of the 5th Division by the 156th on the 16th and 17th. Note the difference: two Infantry Brigades relieving two Divisions – one half the numbers of men for the



THE BIG PARADE

311th Transport, 78th Division, on road to Limey, St. Mihiel Sector, September 13, 1918.

same area. As the 311th moved in to relieve the 5th Division they encountered an advancing German counter-attack which they, along with a battalion from the 312th, stopped and reversed. The front line of the 156th extended from the Bois de Blainchamp where they met the 155th, to la Souleuvre Ferme. Headquarters for the 311th was southeast of Vieville-en-Haye in the Bois de Saint Claude.

On the 18th Fourth Corps took over the entire Saint Mihiel operation, freeing up First Corps for other duties. The next few days were spent building fortifications, repairing roads and conducting minor raids. On the 25th the order came down for Fourth Corps to push forward on their entire front line. The entire First U.S. Army was advancing, as were all the Allied troops from the Atlantic coast to Switzerland: the Meuse-Argonne Offensive had begun.



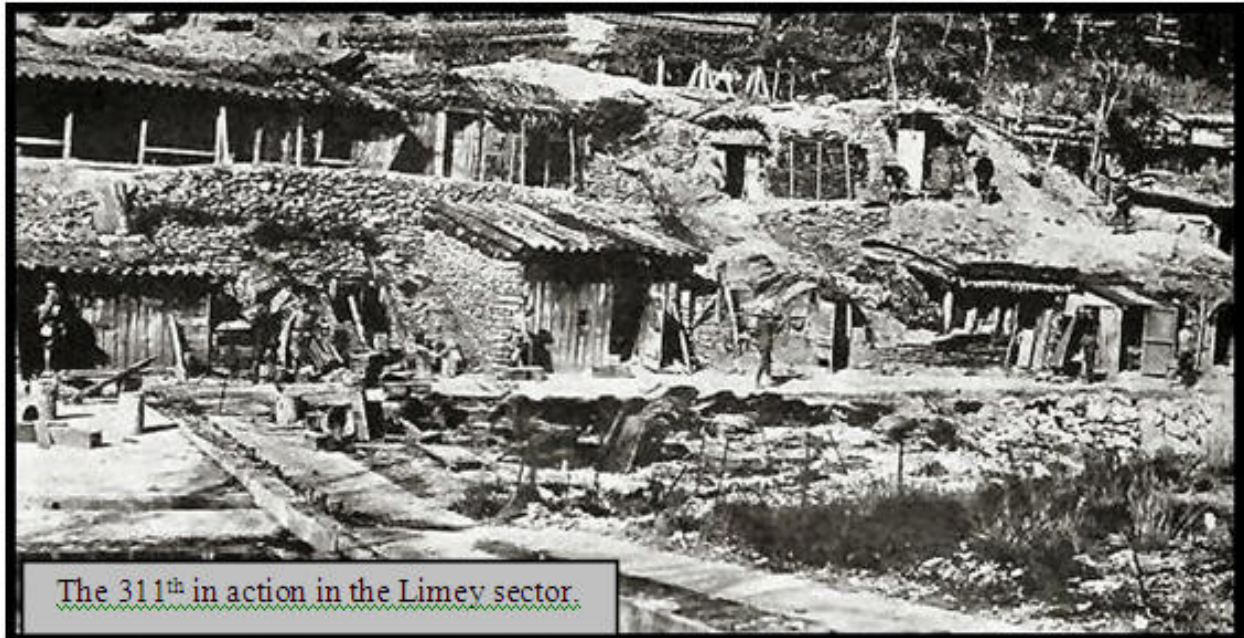
MAKING THE IMPOSSIBLE, **POSSIBLE**

The ability to sense when a change in plans is required often marks a great leader. Foch, urged on by British Commander Sir Douglas Haig, came to see that this war might be ended before the year ran out. Rather than hunker down for the winter, a massive offensive along the entire front from the Channel to Alsace. Once the American First Army captured Saint Mihiel, the next step was to give the appearance that the Americans intended to maintain this as the primary offensive site and proceed to Metz.

Pershing did this by keeping his best divisions on the Saint Mihiel front. In reality, as that operation progressed, many battalions were marched off to the Meuse, about forty miles west, under the cover of darkness. Their goal: to surprise the Germans with a massive show of force at a completely different, and hopefully unnoticed, front: the Meuse-Argonne front. There were only three roads that were sufficient for vehicular traffic between Saint Mihiel and the Meuse fronts. Artillery tractors traveled at three miles-per-hour maximum, thus establishing the pace for everyone else. Pershing no doubt believed that victory was possible; he also believed the British and French armies had fought to the point of exhaustion, after

four years at war, and would buckle under the spring offensive by a reinforced enemy. But he also felt the forces were not as beleaguered as their commanders would make them out to be.

Despite all the odds against maintaining this secrecy: no German raiding parties discovered the troop movements, no enemy airplanes reported a massive build-up at Meuse-Argonne, no captured German POW escaped and reported any overheard plans, no captured Allied soldier or deserter revealed any plans, not even the sound of moving nine American Divisions, over a quarter-million men, betrayed the plan; the silence held



strong.

There is some evidence that the Germans may have obtained some information at the last minute as the German Fifth Guards division started towards the Meuse-Argonne front before the first offensive was launched. Some prisoners revealed that an attack was expected on the 25th in the area but nothing of the order of the magnitude of the actual attack on the 26th. In any event, the extent of the concentration of divisions on this front was completely unexpected. A total of twenty-nine divisions appeared on this new battlefield between the Marne and Argonne Forest in less than two weeks, some after a night time only sixty-mile march. Daylight hours were spent under the cover of the forests trying to sleep. It had been a month since the majority had a shower or bath; their packs weighed 70 pounds; the winter uniforms had yet to arrive and their summer ones, filthy after continuous use for several weeks, were inadequate for the cool and damp early autumn weather. The deception continued with American officers along the Meuse-Argonne line wearing French uniforms and French infantry maintaining the thinnest of frontlines to prevent any American from being captured during the nightly raiding parties across no-man's land. Despite all

odds, the deception worked perfectly and the enemy remained in-the-dark until the opening bombardment on the night of September 25th - 26th.

THE BOMBARDMENT

At 23:30 (11:30 PM) the bombardment started; it ended at 5:30 AM! Six hours, all along the front line, tipped the Germans off: something was up. The 1st Battalion of the 311th advanced through the western edge of the Bois du Trou de la Haie without the assistance of an artillery barrage.

Passing through the Limey sector and Pont-a-Mousson to the east, they advanced to the line just past the town of Thiacourt. They met with strong resistance from the pillboxes with their machine guns, as well as snipers in the trees. The "counter-barrage" was deadly and was only "counter" to the nonexistent barrage preceding the 311th.

Despite the determination of the enemy, by 10:30 AM they had made their objective along most of their fifteen hundred meter front. An enemy barrage at 5:30 PM, followed by an attack had cost so many casualties that an hour later the 311th pulled back to their starting lines.

After this it quieted down to a quieter war on the Woëvre Plain, one in which it was noteworthy that on the 2nd of October, the 311th did not have a single casualty. How odd it is to try and grasp that concept: that this group of men could pass through twenty-four hours without any one of them being killed and this fact was noteworthy. One wonders if, with death so commonplace is life cheapened or cherished more.

On October 3rd orders for the relief of the 78th the following day came from corps headquarters. The 89th would extend their line from the west and take over the front from the 155th while the 90th would do the same

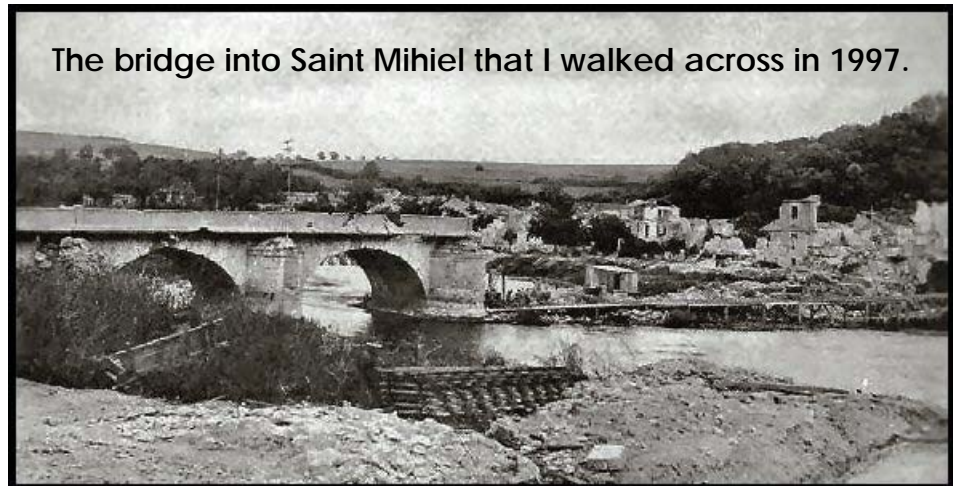
extension of their line from the east taking over the front line of the 156th brigade.

The men were to be disappointed when the rumor of an impending rest turned out false; they marched west all night, most reaching the Forêt de la Reine as planned. One battalion of the



311th made it only as far as the Bois des Grandes before daylight forced a suspension of their march. The town of Thiacourt was finally cleared of men from the 78th by 4 PM on the 5th. Their

immediate destination was the temporary barracks around Beauchamp Ferme just west of Clermont-en-Argonne. The barracks was reached by most of the division on the 7th. The 155th and most of the 156th were able to wash and get clean clothes for the first time since the beginning of September over the next two days. Orders arrived for a movement on the 10th into the Argonne Forest, west of Montblainville.



THE MEUSE-ARGONNE OFFENSIVE

FIRST AND SECOND ATTACKS: 26 SEPTEMBER AND 4 OCTOBER 1918

The Meuse-Argonne was the proverbial “shot across the bow” of the Imperial ship: two attacks were slated for the 28th – a Franco-Belgium attack across Belgium and another French attack at Malmaison; an Anglo-French attack at Cambrai-St. Quentin followed on the 29th, the French Fifth Army swung into action on the 30th advancing on Rheims from the west; and on the 3rd of October another French Army attacked east of Rheims.

The Meuse-Argonne Offensive lasted forty-seven days and remains to this day “the largest and most costly battle in American history down to the present writing [2004], with 1.2 million Americans in the field and a cost in dead alone (in addition to more than 100,000 wounded and missing) of 26,000 men, virtually the size of an American Division.”¹ There were four separate offensive attacks during the Meuse-Argonne Offensive before victory was obtained. The first attack began September 26th and ended on the 29th; the second began October 4th and ended October 11th; the third in which Albert Matelena was wounded, started October 14th; and the last began November 1st, ending with the Armistice on the 11th.

¹ (Ferrel, Meuse-Argonne Diary).

The opening battle began the night of September 25th. Major-General Liggett had assumed command of the First Army from Pershing while his position at First Corps was filled when Major-General Joseph T. Dickman transferred from Fourth Corps. The weather that day and the following was the beautiful autumnal weather often called Indian summer. The leaves of the forest were already turning gold and red and the terrain with its ravines and hills looked stunning and probably not too difficult to traverse.

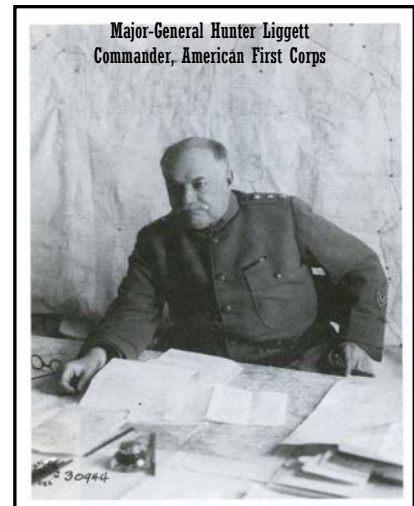
The largest subsector of all fronts was that assigned to the 77th Division, which was to be relieved by the 78th on October 15th. We have already seen that the 78th was advancing along the front in the Saint Mihiel vicinity on this night. The 77th's front was five miles wide and started at about the midpoint, on the north-south axis, of the Argonne Forest which was close to fifty miles in the north to south measurement. The right was bordered by the Aire River with the American 28th Division on the opposite bank, and the western edge of the forest marked the left, with the French



Major-General Dickman

Fourth Army to the west. The front line extended from Côte 182 near Saint Juvin, through Chevières and Barbançon Ferme to Grand Prè. The Aire River ran in a northerly direction with a curve to the west that increased in degree after approximately fifteen miles until it headed northwest to Grand Prè some five miles distant.

Pershing's anticipated goal



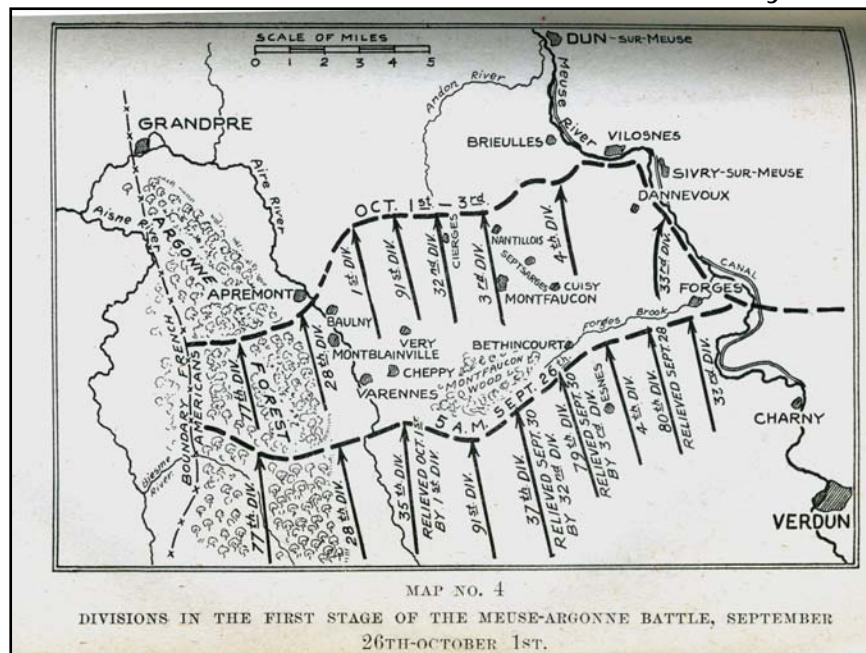
Major-General Hunter Liggett
Commander, American First Corps

of the first day was to overrun the *Giselher Stellung* and get behind the German second line about a mile away. Known as the *Kriemhilde Stellung*, in this sector it ran from Grand Prè to Landres-et-Saint Georges. The German first line, or *Hauptwiderstandslinie*, was easily broken but the *Kriemhilde Stellung* remained intact and untouched. Additional lines ran through parts of the sector: the *Wiesenschlenken Stellung*, the *Hagen Stellung*, the *Volker* and *Etzel Stellung*, offering more resistance. Allied Commander Foch did not share Pershing's confidence in the troops: he privately believed the Americans might be able to achieve some of the first-day objectives by Christmas.

The 77th had a tough fight before them made even tougher by their lack of experience. One wonders why Pershing placed this green division at what may well have been the most difficult sector of the American front, starting off with twenty-five miles through dense forest that was filled with machine-gun nests. Made up from draftees from New York City and the

areas surrounding, the "Metropolitan" Division's training in the States was so poor that they had to reinstitute basic training on three separate occasions after arriving in France on 28 March 1918. While a division with a full complement of 28,000 is a force to be reckoned with, it was also nonexistent in France. The personnel required to maintain the huge American force were often taken right out of the infantry divisions and all of the 77th's officers had been transferred to other divisions; most men did not know who their commanders were outside of their immediate unit supervisor.

Many factors account for the spectacular "failure" of the AEF during the first battle: overestimation of the abilities of green troops, an almost complete breakdown in lines of communication from the front to Corp Headquarters, the operations of each division as a separate entity rather than part of a much larger unit. This alone accounted for thousands of wasted man-hours as each division had to carry in their own supplies,



ammunition, hospitals and then to carry it all out upon being relieved. Of course, the relieving division had to carry all their own supplies in, thus jamming the roads with incoming and outgoing supply trains. Added to this mess was the overlapping of adjacent divisions, each using the same torn up roads for different purposes:

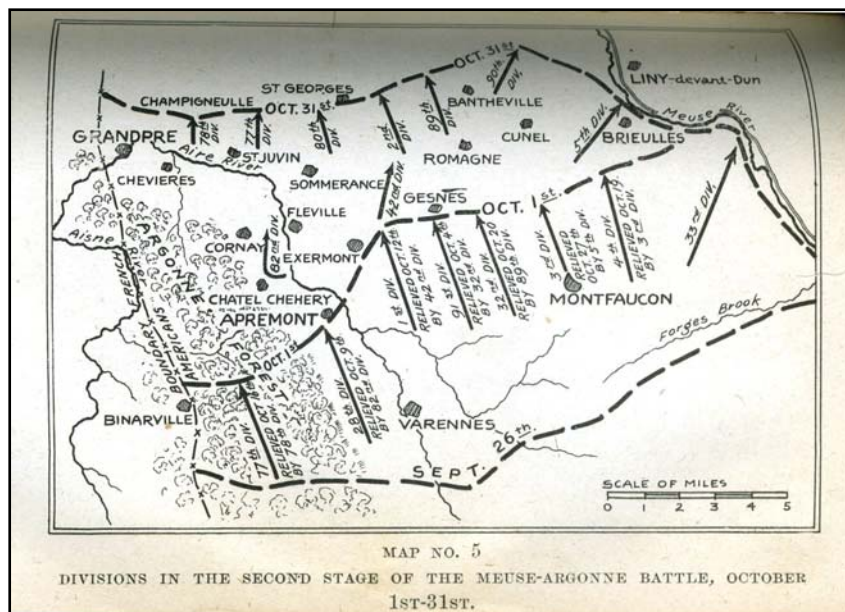
one may be bringing up artillery while its' neighbor was trying to bring up food, and the relieved divisions were scurrying to the rear with their own objectives to complete. That there were only two first-class roads that led up to the front line complicated an impossible situation leading one military leader to declare "The Americans have succeeded in creating the largest traffic jam of the war!" This "failure" must be qualified with the understanding that the left and right flanks advanced one mile while the center advanced four miles creating a huge bulge into German territory. The rolling food carts made it to the front only after the fourth day of battle, and were relatively useless at that. Fires could not be started as it would alert the enemy to the American positions, so the supplies of meats spoiled. American rations included a two pound can of meat which was to supply four men. As only 1 man could carry the can, the other three had to either keep

track of their man during the heat of battle, or go without. The one carrying the can ate as the progress of the battle allowed. Once filled, there was no means to continue to carry the opened can of meat and no way to easily locate his dining companions so thousands of pounds of meat were tossed aside.

Societal constructs also played a roll in the confusion. In the agricultural regions of France, the farmers lived in the village, away from their farmland. In America, most farmers lived on their farmland, thus creating identifiable landmarks. In the French countryside, it was often impossible to tell where you were at, let alone where you were supposed to go – it all looked the same!

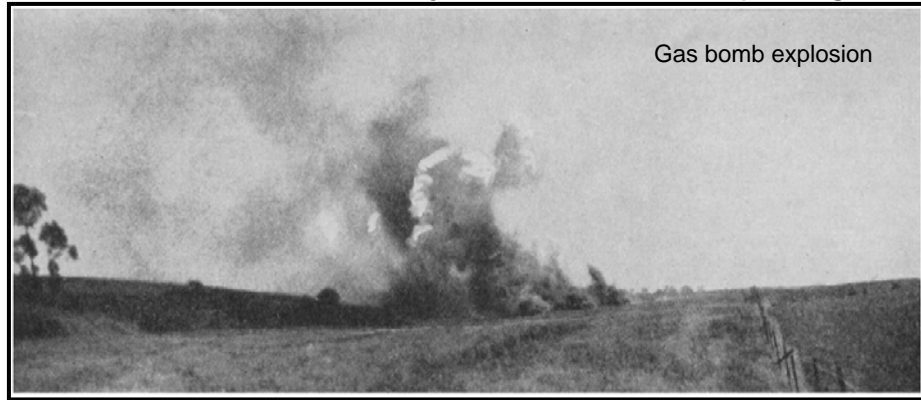
Even worse than the roads leading to the front, were the roads behind the *Giselher Stellung*. Germany did not have sufficient quantities of rubber for tires and relied on light railroads for transport, not vehicles. Without vehicles there was no need to maintain roads. The three to four mile zone just behind the enemy's line had four years of bombing without maintenance which left the roads a shambles. The impassible roads needed to be

repaired as fast as the infantry passed over them. A rough estimate was that each acre of land had been shelled one hundred and fifty times. Without road repairs, there could be no supplies, no food, no ammunition and no advance. The beautiful weather of the first frustrating day of battle gave way to fog, mist and rains which turned



the once-idyllic countryside into a nightmare of mud up to three feet deep; a "wall" of white fog through which at any moment someone could stumble through leaving only the shortest interval to determine whether they were friend or foe; trenches and funkholes, as foxholes were called, filled with water offered little refuge. The wounded were left where they fell as no litter bearers were available and, even if they were, no stretchers had been brought to the front. If able to, the injured soldier was told to walk towards the rear to any railroad depot and grab a train to a hospital farther in the rear – that was the extent of medical care available.

The first aid stations were overrun the first day with hundreds of injured lying unprotected in the rain, often in mud over a foot deep, for two or three days at a time. The lucky ones got something to cover themselves with and if extremely lucky, were given something, anything, to eat. As the temperatures dipped further each day, they were reminded as they lay in the rain and mud, their winter uniforms had yet to arrive. The opening offensive lasted three days, by which time the need for regrouping was apparent everywhere. Commanders had lost touch with their troops, entire divisions had not been heard from, and the Germans were moving in support troops.



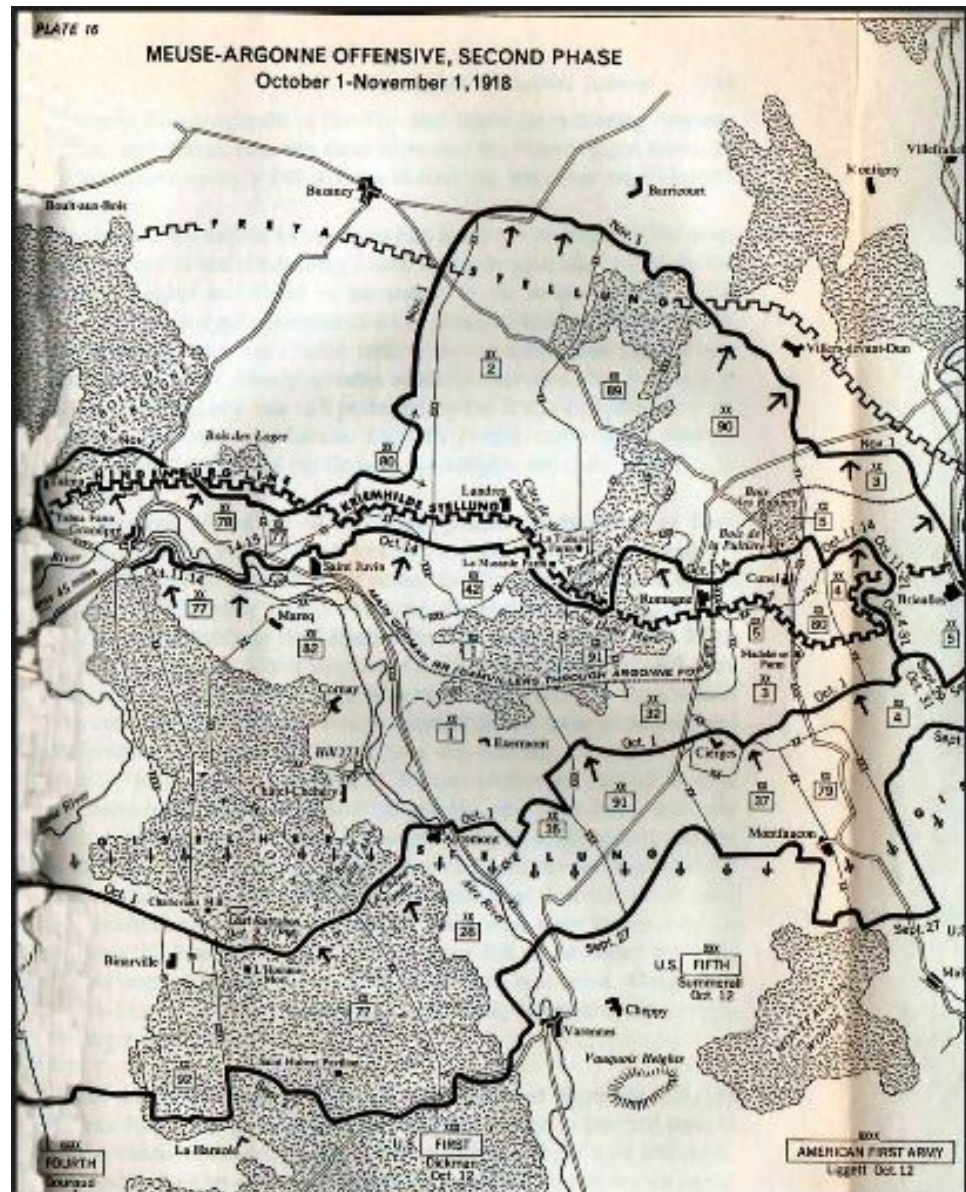
The 77th had advanced about three miles and were still in the thick of the forest. Pershing's overestimation of the abilities of his troops didn't allow for German reinforcements to make their entrance. The reality was devastatingly the opposite. German divisions were already on the move and started arriving on the German front by the 27th.



Ludendorff was adamant: Meuse-Argonne must be held or the Imperial army would be lost. For the Allied forces, it was just as imperative to obtain the Lille-Metz railroad which would cut off the enemy's supply line. The importance of the supply line is illustrated by the focus of the German artillery on the second day of the Meuse-Argonne offensive. It was not on the advancing infantry but behind them, on the supply lines being built.

The second battle was launched on October 4th and this time the Aire Valley witnessed the 77th obtaining the greatest gains of First Corps if you include the gains made by them from the 29th to the 4th. The story of the infamous "Lost Battalion" which was neither lost nor a Battalion, began on October 2nd and lasted five days. The creation of a newspaper reporter, the "Lost Battalion" captured the attention of the American public like no other.

Several units, including men of the 308th Infantry, reached the northern edge of the Argonne by the 2nd only to become surrounded by Germans. For five days they fought off the German attacks before being rescued when, after a fifteen-hour artillery bombardment, the 77th attacking from the south, assisted by the 82nd attacking from the west, drove the enemy out of the forest and into the town of Grand Prè, the western anchor of the



Kriemhilde Stellung along the American zone. By the 11th it was again apparent that a regrouping of the forces was necessary and the Americans dug-in for a defensive position.

THE MEUSE-ARGONNE OFFENSIVE

THIRD ATTACK: 14 OCTOBER 1918

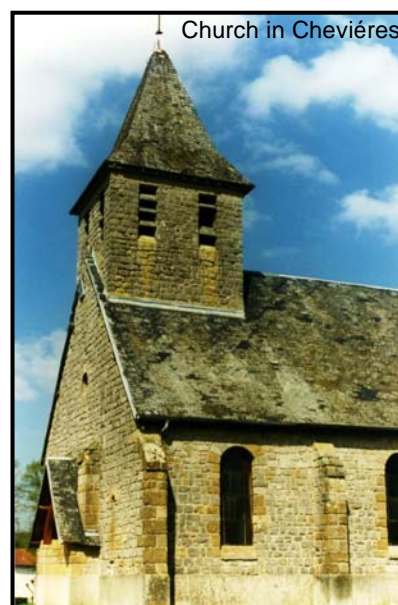


Chevières

The third battle was launched on October 14th at which time the 77th crossed the Aire River and attacked Grand Prè, or it should be said that this is how the vast majority of histories are written. While it is technically true, it is not a full picture: yes, the Aire was crossed, but the territory on the south side of the Aire was not cleared of the enemy – the small

village of Chevières, around which the Aire curved, harbored a pocket of Germans. The Lightning Division entered the front line on the night of the 15th and on the 16th had started to “mop up” the town and in this manner was credited with the liberation of Chevières. “...the 78th was to have no open field for its bolts of lightning, but must use them as hammer-heads against granite, ...”² To add to the danger, the Aire riverbed divides into two just east of Grand Prè and both had to be forded under heavy enemy fire from the Bourgogne Wood to the north and the Loges Wood to the east.

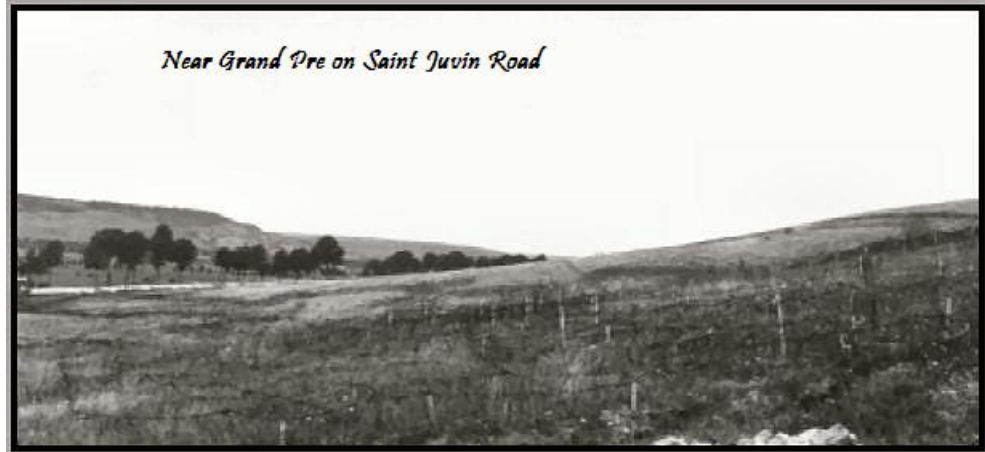
As the 78th moved westward from St. Mihiel, Major-General McRae had informed the Battalion commanders the division would be relieving the 82nd Division. The best officers rushed forward and spent several days mapping the front as well as patrolling. Quite unexpectedly, and not explained, these orders were countermanded. Instead they would be relieving the 77th, to the left of the 82nd, along a front they knew nothing about. The planned attack time was 5:30 AM. The ensuing confusion caused their late arrival. The 2nd Battalion of the 310th had marched all night, parallel to the frontline and ended up no closer to it. Discouraged with the lack of progress, the 78th was ordered to abandon the cover of the Argonne Forest and cross the Aire and five hundred yards of open field at 10:30 AM. This single order



² (Palmer, p.541)

caused almost an equal number of casualties as did the entire St. Mihiel offensive.

When I first started to research the Lightning Division's



movements from the night of October 15th when the 78th relieved the 77th to October 21st when Albert Matelena was wounded, I was puzzled by the daily advances which were often measured in yards. Upon visiting the hamlet of Chevières, which the 78th liberated, and the fields beyond, I could not readily explain the lack of advance. Several years passed from my initial investigations to the time I studied this assault in detail. The topography offered almost insurmountable advantages to the Germans. The Aire River, situated in a wide valley, was bordered by steep hills, often to the point of being referred to as cliffs, topped with impenetrable forests with dense underbrush. This provided superb points of defensive positions for machine-gun nests and heavy artillery. The immediate goal, the capture of Grand Prè, was further hampered by the presence of a medieval citadel within that town. The citadel provided the Germans with the opportunity to enter the town at will; entering the houses through the rear; they were able to provide a formidable obstacle by appearing in the windows of the upper stories and firing down into the street that rose from the valley floor into the town itself, virtually the only way into town.

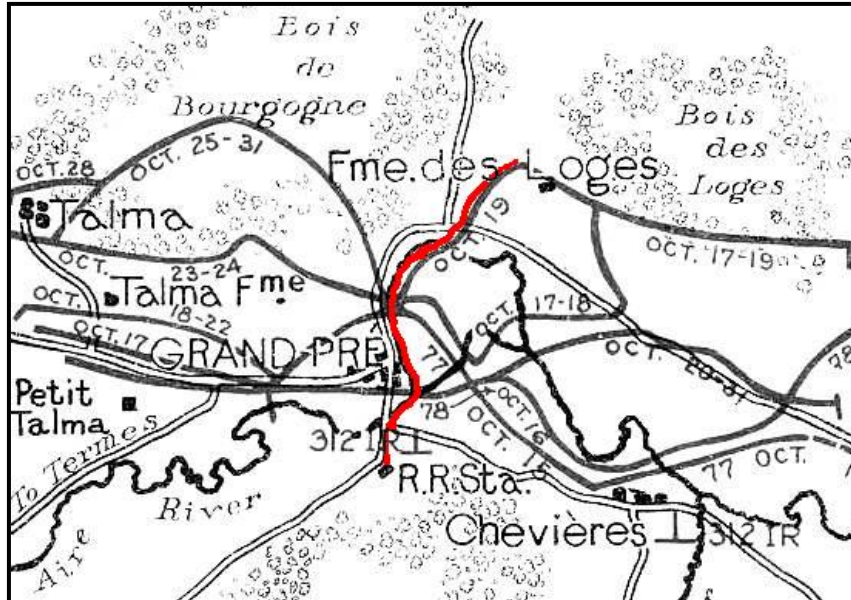
The futility of wars in general came alive when studying this advance



16 October 1918, 311th Infantry soldiers take a break

for it was then that I realized the goals as set before the 78th were not only unreasonable, but unattainable. The AEF command knew this to be true at the time orders were issued. The overarching goal for the American First Army was to allow the 42nd Division, now to the right of the 78th after they replaced the 82nd, to take the stronghold of the Chatillon ridge. They also hoped to drain the

enemy from the Barricourt ridge sector where the next assault was scheduled by making it appear the next assault would be elsewhere along the line. These goals were obtained only through the sacrifice of the men, as well as sacrificing the men, of the Lightning Division. Every bullet, mortar and gas bomb the men of the 78th took was one less available to use against the 42nd. How far down the line of command did this information pass?



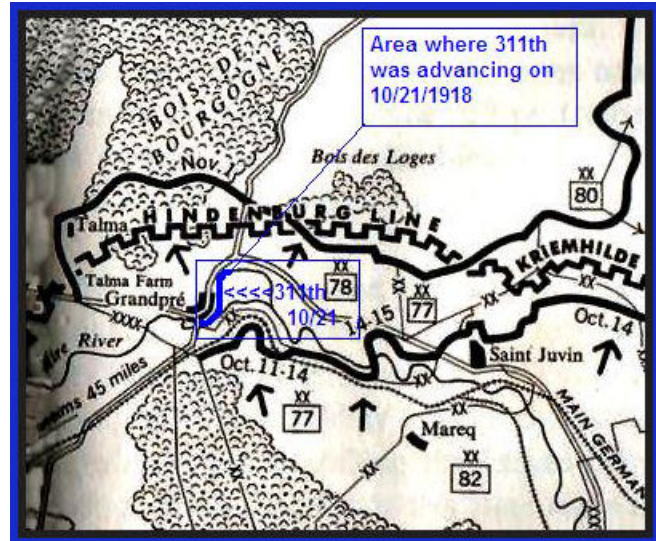
Probably not much beyond Pershing and a small number of confidants. How effective would an assault be if the men on the line had any idea that their superiors had sent them on a mission deemed improbable if not impossible, for the sole reason to attract enemy fire and suffer casualties and thus spare others in

another battle sector? "...the 78th Division not only drew arrows to its breast but charged them in their flight... Sacrifice is the only word for the 78th's action. Without expecting that the division could gain ground, the Army command set it the thankless task of repeated attacks to consume the enemy's strength, which it carried out with superb ardor and fortitude."³ Pershing wrestled with this dilemma continuously and the toll it took is probably a main reason that Major-General Liggett assumed Pershing's command during part of October 1918 while he recovered from what has been described as a nervous breakdown by some.

In researching and recounting the Division's movements, several first-hand sources were consulted: Field Operations of the Medical Department of the United States Army in the World War (1925); Battalion War Diary for the 311th Infantry (1918?); as well as some very creditable second-hand sources: the AEF Order of Battle (1988); the Troop Directory of the Interior Zone, Order of Battle (1988); the American Armies and Battlefields in France (1992); plus some non-governmental primary and secondary sources such as Palmer's 1919 epic Our Greatest Battle; The History of New York State, Book XI, Chapter 11, part 4 (1927); and the *American Heritage* article "Two Argonnes" appearing in the October 1968 volume. While the vast majority of the information found was consistent from source to source, some

³ Palmer, Our Greatest Battle

relatively minor details are not and these inconsistencies cloud any discussion of the day-to-day movements of the 311th. Was Chevières “mopped up” on the 16th or the 19th? Were there troops from the 77th in the town of Grand Prè when the 78th relieved them on the night of the 15th? The following is my best educated guess after consulting the sources listed, and some others; it may contain factual errors of which none are intended. A listing of sources is found in the bibliography section.



The 78th's advance after reaching the Aire is best understood when separated into two parts: the left (156th) brigade, including the 311th and 312th, operating against the Grand Prè positions and the right (155th) brigade, made up of the 309th and 310th, against the Loges Wood positions. From the unit history, the movements of the 311th Brigade are known. Hopefully, at some point, more detailed records will be found that reveal where Company E was during the left's advance, especially on the 21st when Albert was wounded.



A description of Grand Prè and environs will help to explain the difficulties encountered by the 78th. Grand Prè, a small town of one thousand was situated on a slight rise at the northwest edge of the Argonne forest.

The main entrance to town is an east-west road that runs parallel to the Aire, itself being an easy target for enemy fire from the higher surrounding ground outside the town and from the town itself. There is a tongue of rock that projects into the town from the north

ending with thirty-foot high perpendicular cliffs. Surmounted by the ruined sixteenth century chateau of

Comte Bellejoyeuse, it afforded an unobstructed sight line to any person, friend or foe, in or around the town. "The Citadel" afforded direct access to town over a narrow causeway. The only other way to capture the citadel would be to scale its stone walls. The ruins of the chateau were in a park that stretched about 700 yards along Saint Juvin Road to the Bellejoyeuse farm. Heading west-north-west from Grand Prè brings one to Talma farm, which is halfway to Talma village. Situated among the farm and the village is Talma hill.



An attack was planned for 5:30 AM on the 16th. It had rained hard the night of the 15th and the effort was poorly coordinated as there was little understanding of what lay in front of them due to the last-minute switch of what division they were to relieve. The rains had been ongoing and the troops had to advance through mud that was knee-deep in some areas. The muddy, slow pace brought on by the rains was tolerated as this same rain and mud caused enemy shells to sink deeper before detonating which cut the amount of shrapnel significantly. In the confusion of that night, reconnaissance of the front line was not done and the ignorance and mistakes of the scouts led to ensuing troubles. The 310th did not reach the front line until 11:30 AM. Unaware of this, the 311th under the command of Colonel Marcus B. Stokes launched an attack through the early morning mist at 6:35. With virtually no information about the enemy's position and the absence of the 310th to the east, Major George T. Adee led the 2nd Battalion



TALMA HILL NORTHWEST OF GRANDPRE

to which Albert belonged, of the 311th north and proceeded to take some prisoners in the town of Chevières and advanced to the Aire River. Two platoons forded the river before the mist lifted. The enemy positioned machine guns in the woods north of Saint Juvin Road, less than a half-mile from the

river. German artillery and machine gun fire prevented any further advance for the day. During the night of the 16th, the remaining troops crossed the Aire and moved in an arc westward, advancing the line towards Grand Prè, covering a distance less than a mile before being stopped by enemy fire. Every man from the 2nd Battalion of the 312th who entered the town as part of the first patrol was killed or wounded. During the day of the 17th the line was established that created an arc extending from a point just south of the Talma farm, nipped the southern edge of the town and swung back north to

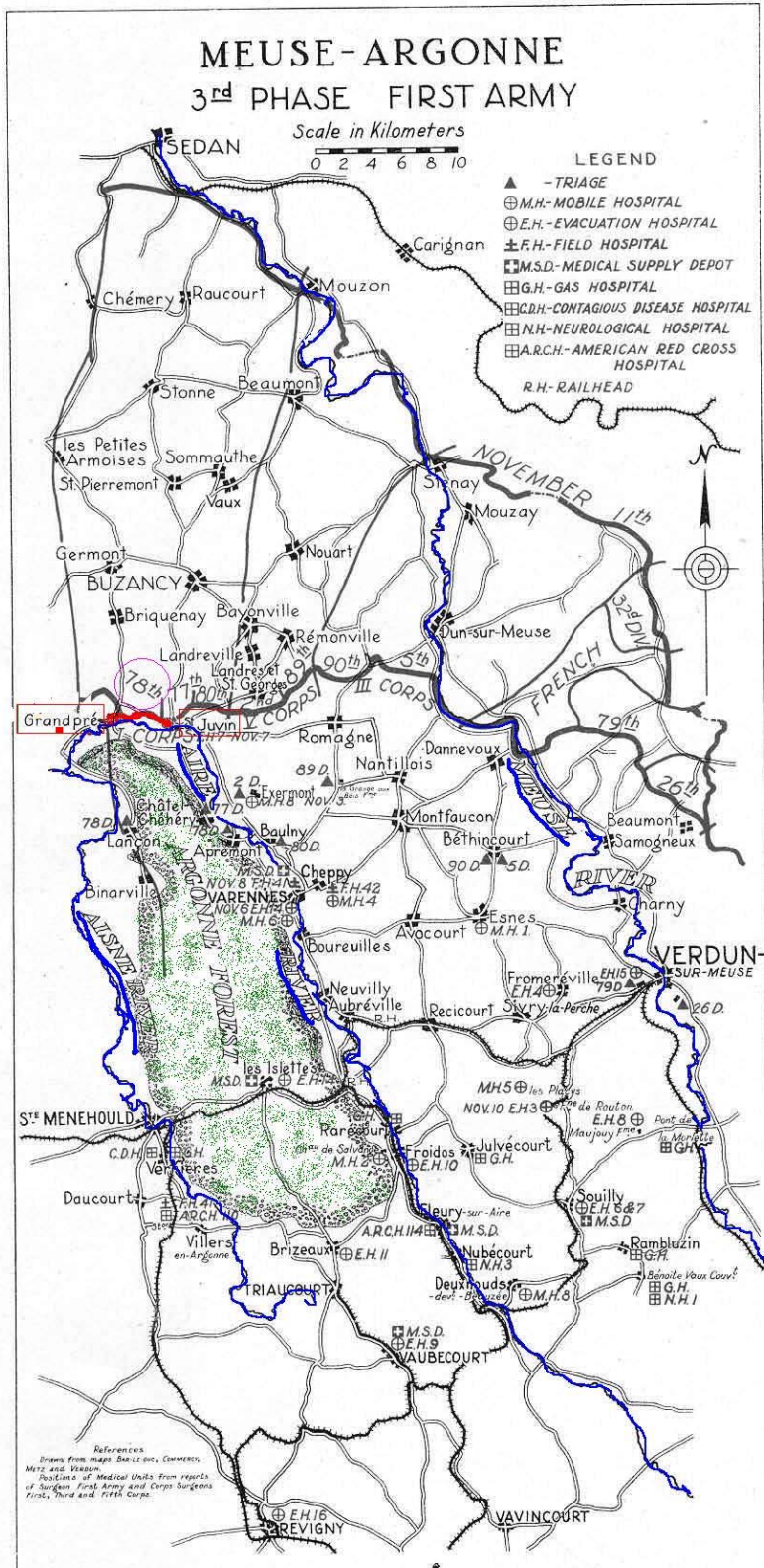


29 October 1918, soldiers of the 311th crowd around a stove near Grand Prè.

Saint Juvin Road. The following day, the 310th to the east, or right, of the 311th, advanced in the Bois des Loges without maintaining liaison. This created a mile-wide gap covering Loges farm which was occupied by the enemy. The number of American troops in the town increased from the 16th onward and the town is reported to have been cleared of enemy troops on the 19th. That this "clearing" was not complete may be inferred from the date the unit was credited for liberating Grand Prè, October 27th.

At midnight on the 18th, a heavy bombardment on the citadel signaled the 2:00 AM attack by the 156th Brigade. The 312th approached from the west along the Bellejoyeuse farm, to be joined by the 311th that attacked at 3:00 AM. The 311th took the Loges farm but was stopped three hundred yards east of Bellejoyeuse farm, taking shelter under a ridge. The left advanced two hundred yards to the orchard on the north edge of Loges farm but could not make connection with the 310th. They were able to maintain this line under heavy artillery

and machine-gun fire until the late afternoon when an enemy barrage forced the men in the orchard to fall back to the safety of the ridge. It was clear that the 78th was near the point of exhaustion; there were no reserves from the brigade or the division and requests to the corps for replacements were denied. All of the arriving Divisions were stripped, often leaving only one enlisted man per company and one officer per regiment to maintain the unit history.



Battle lines, taken from Final Report, Gen. John J. Pershing, September 1, 1919, are approximate.

While the 156th Brigade had its hands full with the town, the goal of the 155th Brigade was to clear Loges Wood and stop the damages inflicted by enemy fire from that sector. The woods to the north and east of Grand Prè were sites of ongoing fighting and it was not until the 27th that they were cleared as the enemy retreated. Loges Wood was thick enough to shield infantry from an artillery barrage, yet sparse enough for machine gun nests. The layout of the land was a series of ravines, each offering a natural avenue for machine gun fire.

Events occurring in other parts of the line determined the future of the 78th. The *Kriemhilde Stellung* had been successfully taken in the center and this was to be the site for the major offensive moves.

As a result, all divisions on the left

were pulled back for safety on the morning of the 20th amid much grumbling of the survivors who had fought for the woods at enormous human costs. The 309th and 310th were pulled back to Grand Prè - Saint Juvin Road; the 311th from the Ferme des Greves on that road to the railroad station (marked in red on the map on page 29) and the 312th from the station west towards Talma farm. A light rail track extended east from this station through Chevières and followed the Aire southeast as far as Apremont.

Between the 20th and the 23rd, the records are less detailed, which is to be expected as the information most desired, the specifics of Albert Matelena's injuries, occurred on the 21st or so it is thought. Other than reference to "the usual patrols," the records reviewed thus far are silent until the 23rd.

After the taking of the citadel several days later, the reason why Allied artillery fire had been particularly ineffective in this area was discovered. The guns were lowered by cable into dugouts when not in use. Immediately following a barrage, they were hoisted and turned on the advancing infantry following closely behind the barrage.

"COUNT' MATELENA WOUNDED IN FRANCE"

21 OCTOBER 1918

Albert told the story to his younger brother John: he was advancing up a slope and when he reached the top, the Germans opened fire from a machine-gun nest.

He jumped to the safety of the closest funkhole; unfortunately, it was filled with the denser-than-air poison gas. Immediately immobilized, possibly complicated by the long term effects of his bout with typhoid at thirteen years old, he had to be dragged from the hole and carried to the first-aid station. The nature of his injuries will be discussed more fully at a later point; I will say here that whatever they were, they had to be severe. Men were at a premium and all were pressed into action. The ongoing flu epidemic was worsening with thousands down due to it, reinforcements from the states were arriving at a rate of 300,000 per month, which was far below what was required, widespread dysentery had decimated the ranks; some divisions, in theory 28,000 men, had 10,000 or less! Albert's injuries were of such a degree that he was

**'COUNT' MATELENA
WOUNDED IN FRANCE**

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Matelena, of 421 Princeton avenue, have received word that their son, Private Albert J.



ALBERT J. MATELENA.
Matelena, has been wounded and gassed in battle. He is now convalescent at Camp Beau Desert, France.
Matelena, better known among his friends as "Count," is a member of Company "E," 311th Infantry. He received his military training at Camp Dix and went overseas in May with the Seventy-eighth division.

The State Gazette, December 6, 1918



transported to a Base Hospital clear across France where he would spend the next two months.

We can follow the Count on his odyssey across France. He was carried by litter to one of four Battalion Aid Stations in the immediate vicinity where he was examined at about 4:00 PM. Two of the four stations were maintained by

the 309th and 310th Infantry and were located about a half-mile west of Saint Juvin on the Grand Prè - Saint Juvin Road where they serviced mainly the wounded from the 155th Brigade on the right. The 156th Brigade had at its disposal one aid station near the railroad depot where the 311th's front line was established the day before and another maintained by the 312th Infantry a little more than two hundred yards east of Chevières. No records have been found that indicate where the 311th Infantry operated their Battalion Aid Station; the most likely location, at the railroad depot south of Grand Prè, is designated as belonging to the 312th. Knowing in advance of his journey through the Medical Department, it is logical to assume that Albert was taken to the aid station near Chevières. After being carried from the front line, it is known that he was treated at Field Hospital 309. The 309th was easily accessible by road and light rail from Chevières and from the first aid station at the railroad depot, the latter being slightly farther away. From either station, the trip included passing through Chevières and then the ambulance passed through the town of Marcq. This town, about a mile distant, was the location of both the Dressing Station of Ambulance Company No. 311 and the Regimental Aid Station of the 309th Infantry. Of this latter unit, it is noted that all of the medical personnel, save one, and most of the enlisted men were gassed, evacuated and replaced by members of the Regimental band! Six more miles

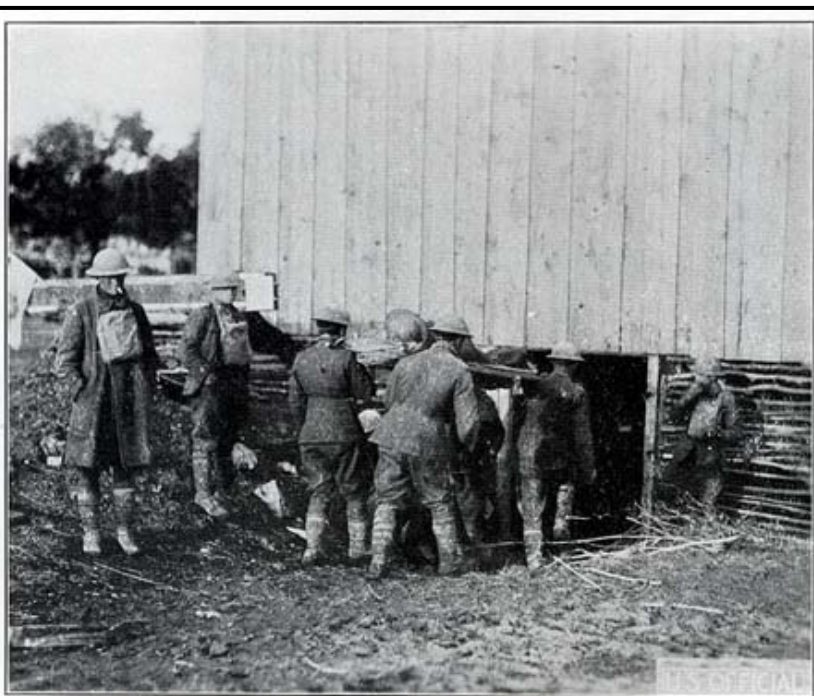


FIG. 77.—First-aid station, 312th Infantry, Grandpre, Ardennes, October 18, 1918

were covered before arriving at Field Hospital 309 in Apremont which was used to treat gassed soldiers. Once there, treatment depended upon whether he had skin contact with mustard gas, inhaled noxious [chlorine] gas or both. In all instances, barring medical emergencies, he would have received a bath using a weak sodium bicarbonate solution. Mustard gas caused the skin to blister and the surface of the eye to become inflamed. These were treated with a sodium bicarbonate solution as well in most cases. It may be that the severity of his condition required the use of oxygen first as his younger brother John related that he had been told by Albert that the inhaled gas immobilized him and he had to be dragged out, "he was helpless."

Once stabilized and bathed, in the ward he would have been given coffee, cocoa or other "stimulating" drink, morphine if required, and reexamined.

It was determined that he was out of immediate danger due to chlorine gas exposure and transferred to the adjacent Field Hospital 312 where he was diagnosed

with acute gastroenteritis, cause unknown. A couple of rather strange entries appear in his file at this point: one handwritten record states that he was admitted on 21 October from Field Hospital 309 and his disposition was to Evacuation Hospital 9 at Vaubecourt, twenty-four miles south, on 22 October 1918. Ambulances took almost seven hours to make this trip for some unexplained reason! This record is believed to have originated from Field Hospital 312. A second record, this one typewritten, states that he was admitted from Field Hospital 312 on October 22nd with disposition marked "Evacuated: Date and destination unknown." Upon closer examination, this record appears to have been altered as "Evacuation Hospital No. 9" was typed and subsequently removed or otherwise covered over. This record should have originated with that hospital and, in fact, it probably did,



indicating he spent a couple of days there before continuing on. The alteration on the record may have been the result of a change in his condition or a change in the hospital units' designation. A typewritten "Transfer Card" states that he was admitted from Field Hospital 312 on October 24th with a diagnosis of "*Trench foot*" and transferred to "Convalescent Camp" at Base Hospital 114 on the 28th of October.

The Hospital Center at Beau Desert was located about five miles west of Bordeaux near the small town of Pichey. Early plans called for ten hospital units of one thousand beds each. Seven additional units were authorized, however only nine hospital units and the Convalescent Camp were eventually completed. Nearly six hundred buildings spread over 550 acres were built to accommodate hospital units and their support systems. Only two units, Base Hospitals 22 and 114 arrived prior to the armistice. Apparently arriving on the 24th of October, Albert spent four days in Base Hospital 114, first in Ward 45 and last in Ward 73. Whether or not his brief stay included other wards is not known.

Once at the Base Hospital, another oddity appears in his records. His "Field Medical Card" contains the notation "*Gassed slightly, Oct. 18th & vomited frequently & felt nauseated for three days & coughed some.*" This record is duplicated by the "Clinical Record" of 27 October 1918 of Ward 73. Where did this date come from? He certainly wasn't dragged off the battle field and carried to the aid station on the 21st if he had been "gassed slightly" on the 18th! A "Brief Clinical Record" from Ward 45 states he was transferred to the adjacent convalescent Camp Beau Desert on the 28th to recover from gas inhalation, aortic incompetence and trench foot.

The Convalescent Camp consisted of twenty-five wooden buildings and two hundred double-sized hospital-ward tents. It was reserved for those determined to be unfit for combatant service, but not requiring ongoing medical care. Patients were divided into companies and battalions and given regular drills, exercise and sports. After being hospitalized for forty-eight days he was released back to active duty on December 7th. News of his injuries had just been reported in the local newspapers in Trenton, NJ. The hospital records reviewed to date were done so using the 18th as the date of injury as found in the Field Medical Card and no mention of Albert was found in any of the hospitals. This further supports the 21st of October as the date of injury.

“THE WAR TO END ALL WARS”

It was quickly becoming evident that Foch's gamble had worked – everywhere the enemy had been turned back and was in retreat. Italy had risen from the ashes and destroyed the army of the Hapsburg Empire; the Ottoman Empire's forces were at the breaking point and the Bulgarian army had been all but annihilated. Ludendorff demanded the formation of a democratic government that should immediately appeal for an armistice, not to King George V or President Poincare, but to President Wilson. Ludendorff was removed from office. Negotiations continued until Wilson's soft peace and his Fourteen Points became superfluous.

The 78th's continued attack finally liberated Grand Prè on October 27th. Their neighbor, in the numerical sense of 78 following 77, and in the geographical sense of New Jersey being next to New York, became their fighting neighbor when the Metropolitan Division returned to action for the last days of combat the Lightning Division participated in. They were relieved by the 42nd on November 5th and regrouped near the town of Les Petites-Armoises. On the 6th they moved to the rest camp west of Varennes-en-Argonne, then to the vicinity of Florent and Les Islettes on the 9th and 10th, and Braux-Saint Remy, south of Sainte Menehould, on the 12th.

Foch, clearly the victor, dictated harsh terms for an armistice, terms that Germany had no choice but to accept. The alternative was complete and full defeat with the whole of Germany being occupied. Pershing opposed an Armistice, preferring to continue the advance with the goal of complete devastation of the enemies' forces. He felt that an Armistice would not be an effective deterrent against a repetition of the aggressive tactics of the German people, as history would show to be true. Perhaps military decisions are best left to military leaders, not politicians.

On the 11th day,

Of the 11th month,

At 11:00 A.M.

.....SILENCE.



Members of the 78th Division being decorated with American Distinguished Service Cross and French decorations—Bordeaux, France, May, 1919

POSTWAR ACTIVITIES

There were medals to give to the brave men who lived and to the survivors of those that didn't. After the Armistice, the AEF sponsored the Inter-Allied Games which involved athletic competitions between 18 Allied and friendly countries. Education was made available in primary, trade and university levels. Each division had their own

newspaper: *The Flash* served this purpose for the Lightning Division. Of course there was also the ever present *Stars & Stripes*. The American Third Army was formed on November 7th and operated as the Army of Occupation until 2 July 1919. Composed of 9 Divisions, it advanced to the German border on November 23rd. By December 9th they had entered Coblenz and they would control the 50-mile bulge into Germany, the American Zone, at Coblenz until July 1919. The American Second Army controlled the area west from the American Zone, across Luxembourg to the French border. In August 1919 the American 1st Division, the first in France, left for the States. A 6,800 man American Army of Occupation remained in Germany until January 1923 when the area was handed over to the French.



The 311th sailed from Bordeaux on the 10th of May. The men brought with them their regiment's song: "*K-K-K-Katy*," "*Mademoiselle From Armentières*," "*Madelon*," and "*Smile, Smile, Smile*" (312th) are thought to be the ones associated with the four infantry regiments of the 78th.

The 78th was the last combat division to head home. They left the Braux-Saint Remy for the 21st (Semur) Training Area where they remained until the end of April 1919. In the third week of April part of the Division moved to Marseilles. The 303rd Trench Mortar Battery was the first to head home when they sailed from Saint Nazaire on the 20th of April. The 311th Regiment stayed at Semur until the 30th when they, with the remainder of the Division moved to Beautiran area.

THE WAR THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

The impact of this war upon the evolution of governments is often

under-appreciated. There was no precedent for a protracted war, no "master plan" to supply, mobilize, feed, clothe and equip millions of combatants; no way to maintain production lines and supply raw materials; no machinery in place to maintain the morale of troops and civilians; in short, nothing to prepare the countries for the blood bath that was "The Great War." Born of necessity was the State, not the one produced by decades of liberal theory and practice, but a State of ever-enlarging powers that ordered the mobilization of men and property, squelched dissent and confiscated the means to continue the war.

Wartime propaganda changed from "love and defend your country" to the ugly and crude "hate and kill your enemy." The devastation destroyed Europe's leading role in the world economy while simultaneously depriving the European countries of the potential leaders the 1920s and 1930s required to rebuild Europe – over 10 million European deaths made recovery impossible. This war demonstrated the inferiority of Superiors, undermined the heretofore expected deference for church and country and brought about the collapse of the social order as it was known.

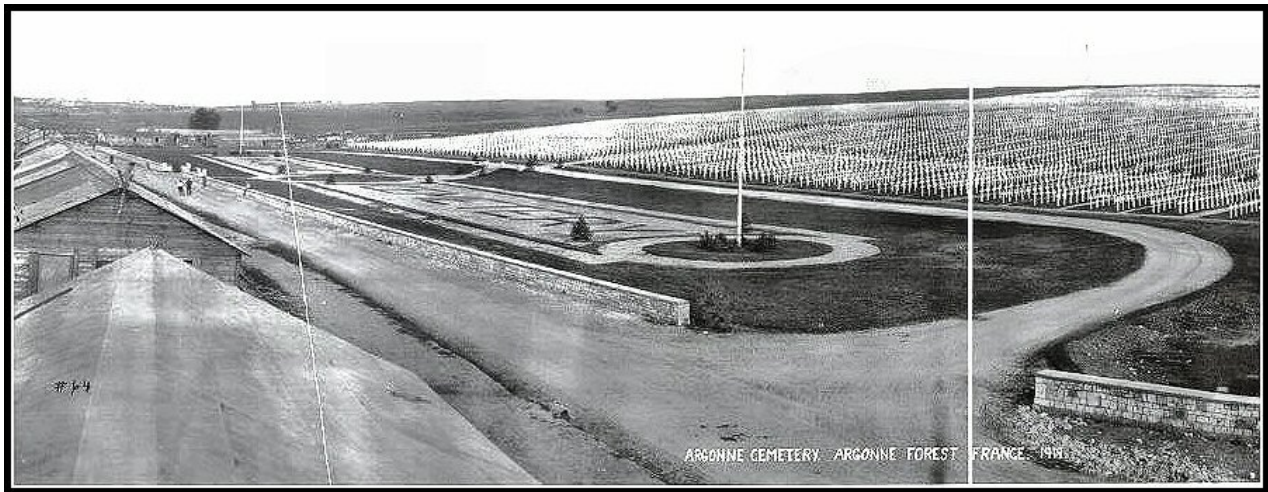
The United States emerged as the undisputed world power, but at home,

Americans wanted to purge themselves of the horrific faces of war and the country turned in on itself for the next twenty years for an "extended Armistice." This country fared poorly in the treaty process, receiving little in compensation from the defeated forces. Large amounts of supplies and ammunition, purchased through the sale of Liberty Bonds, were destroyed rather than returned and the loans made to the Entente countries were never repaid.

STATE OF NEW JERSEY NATIONAL ARMY		
SERVICE RECORD OF 2,409,639		
Surname	Matelena	Albert J. (Christian name)
Address	481 Princeton Ave.	
City	Princeton	County Mercer, State N. J.
Date of birth	Apr 22/1896 New York, N. Y.	
Height	5 ft 10 in	Weight 150 lbs
Complexion	Fair	
Married or single	Single	
(Name, address and relationship of person to be notified in case of emergency)		
Occupation	Student	
Date of registration	June 5th, 1917	
Order Number	769	
Residence at date of registration		
481 Princeton Ave., Princeton, N. J.		
Place of enlistment, i. e., place at which soldier was ordered to report for military duty, as specified in notice from Local Board		
Princeton, N. J.		
Date of enlistment, i. e., date specified in notice		
Feb. 27, 1918		
Place and date of reporting for duty		
Camp Dix, N. J., Feb. 27, 1918		
Was soldier accepted? Yes. If rejected state reasons and date thereof		
Assigned to 153 Dep Brig to Apr 4/18;		
Co E 3 Inf to Nov 15/18; Co E 311		
Form No. 22, A. G. O., 1916 (National Army)		

Never again would any country not be prepared with the "master plan" required to sustain a long and bloody war and the actions of our government, and all governments, since 1918 have been guided, or misguided, by the need to be prepared for the next conflict.

A poignant reminder of the true cost of war can be found at Romagne in France, where the United States Military Cemetery was founded on the 18th of October 1918 and dedicated in 1919. More than fourteen thousand Americans are buried there and stained-glass windows carry the insignia of each American Division in the chapel.



AND NOW, DEAR COMRADES, FAREWELL.

HERE, UNDER THE CLEAR SKIES,

ON THE GREEN HILLSIDES,

AND AMID THE FLOWERING FIELDS OF FRANCE,

IN THE QUIET HUSH OF PEACE,

WE LEAVE YOU FOREVER IN GOD'S KEEPING.

COLONEL JOHN J. PERSHING, 1919

EPILOGUE

Every war throughout recorded history has been monumentalized in many ways. The "Great War" was no exception, unless you consider the sheer number of memorials to create that exception. All over the battle fields you will find memorials placed by Divisions and Regiments, by governments, by schools, and by parents of those killed in action.

On the National Mall in Washington, D.C. stands a monument to the memory of those from the District who lost their lives in the First World War.



Arlington National Cemetery has the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier

and



the World War I Nurse Memorial which depicts Jane Delano, Superintendent of the Army Nurses Corps who died in 1919.

TRENTON, NEW JERSEY saluted those who sacrificed their lives with the
**SOLDIERS AND SAILORS WAR
MEMORIAL BUILDING**



World War I was fresh in everyone's mind, and Mayor Frederick Donnelly endorsed the idea of making the theater building a monument to Trenton's veterans. In 1924, he set up a "War Memorial Committee;" the center was officially designated the Soldiers and Sailors War Memorial Building.

For a building site, the state of New Jersey donated an acre of land on the southern side of Lafayette Street, in what was then part of Stacy Park.

On New Year's Eve, 1930, the War Memorial cornerstone was laid. Over the course of 1931, concrete foundations were poured, Indiana limestone was hauled into place and the vision of architects William Klemann and Louis Kaplan took shape.

Memorial Court, the passage toward the lobby, was built as a dual shrine to soldiery and the arts. Names of every Trentonian who died in the World War were inscribed on a set of four bronze tablets. "We shall never war except for peace," reads an inscription.



Past the bronze doors of the lobby was the centerpiece of the War Memorial: the 1,926-seat theater, twice as big as anything in Trenton at the time. Chestnut paneling covered the walls and the ceiling shone in cool turquoise and gold tiles. To either side of the theater, a pair of wings housed a 700-seat assembly room, smoking

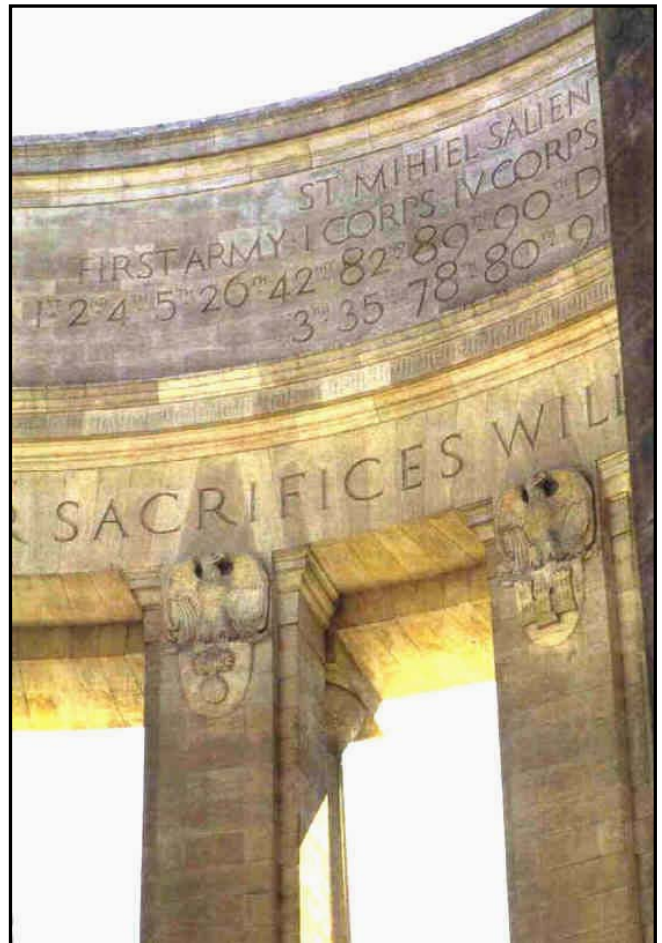
room and ballroom.

(JON BLACKWELL, 1931: Temple for Trenton's arts, *The Trentonian* <http://www.capitalcentury.com/1931.html>)

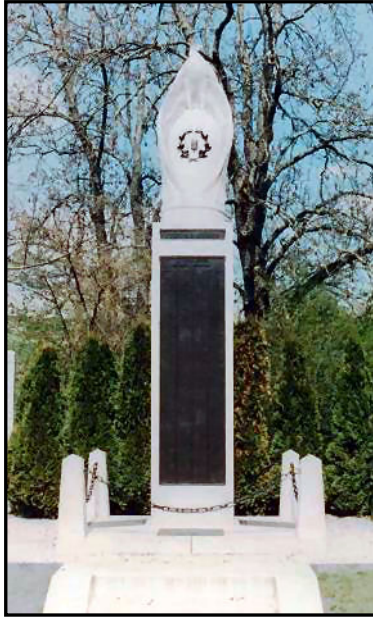


Cincinnati, Ohio has their War Memorial in Washington Park.

In **Saint Mihiel** stands a monument hauntingly similar to the one in

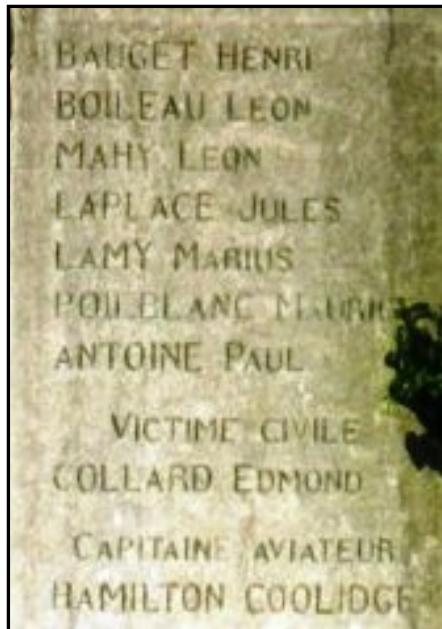


Washington, D.C.



Army Divisions placed monuments in France like this one dedicated to the fallen of the 2nd Division located near the Meuse-Argonne front.

Even the tiny village of **Chevières** has a memorial. When I visited the village in 1997, the local citizens were still expressing their gratitude for our help in winning the war.



One local farmer insisted I drive out to a pasture where first I was followed by cows,



and then surprised to find this:



A family's personal monument,
placed at the site where,
on October 18, 1918,



Looking towards Grand Pre

their son, Hamilton Coolidge,
whose name appears on the monument




in Chevières, was killed when
his plane was shot down.

EVEN MORE REMARKABLE IS THAT THE WRECKAGE OF HIS PLANE IS STILL THERE.....



Albert landed back in the States and headed right back to where he started out – Camp Dix. He was mustered out with an Honorable Discharge of the United States Army on the 30th of May, 1919. He returned to Trenton where he would spend the next sixty years getting married, raising a family and entertaining grandchildren. But before he did those things, he maintained contact with his wartime buddies. Company E held their first reunion less than three months after their discharge on the 21st of August at the War Camp Community Services club room. Entertainment was provided

HONORABLE DISCHARGE FROM THE UNITED STATES ARMY	
	
TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:	
<p>This is to Certify, That <u>Albert J. Matelna</u> <u>† 2409639 Private Co. E 311th Inf. 78th Div.</u> THE UNITED STATES ARMY, as a TESTIMONIAL OF HONEST AND FAITHFUL SERVICE, is hereby HONORABLY DISCHARGED <u>from the military service of the</u> UNITED STATES by reason of: <u>Circular 106 W.D. 1918</u> <u>Said Albert J. Matelna 2409639 was born</u> <u>in New York, in the State of New York.</u> <u>When enlisted he was 22 years of age and by occupation a Barber.</u> <u>He had Brown eyes, Black hair, Dark complexion, and</u> <u>was 5 feet 4 3/4 inches in height.</u> <u>Given under my hand at Camp Dix New Jersey this</u> <u>30 day of May, one thousand nine hundred and nineteen</u></p>	
<p><u>R.H. Fisher</u> <u>Major U.S.A.</u> <u>Commanding.</u></p>	
Form No. 625, A- G. O. Oct. 9-16.	<p>*Insert name, Christian name first; e. g., "John Doe." †Insert Army serial number, grade, company and regiment or arm or corps or department; e. g., "1420, 9639," "Corporal, Company A, 1st Infantry"; "Sergeant, Quartermaster Corps"; "Sergeant, First Class, Medical Department." ‡If discharged prior to expiration of service, give number, date, and source of order or full description of authority therefor.</p>

by men of the unit and a showing of Charlie Chaplin's "Shoulder Arms" while refreshments were served. He became a member of the Veterans of World War I which would later assume the title of the more familiar Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW).

The 78th had a large number of Italian-Americans and they were honored with a their own victory parade which ended near St. Joachim's Roman Catholic Church in the Chambersburg section of the city. The veterans were entertained by a performance of the children attending the school attached

to that church as well as an honorary dinner.

Albert's breathing was affected by being gassed; he found he could no longer work in a closed space, such as a barbershop as he had before the war. He also had to give up one of his favorite pastimes – baseball. He applied for, and received a small pension for his injuries, that he would collect for the rest of his life.

The 78th Division would return to Europe, traversing much of the same ground in less than twenty years:









APPENDIX 1: ORGANIZATION OF THE A.E.F. WITH THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF TROOPS.

AMERICAN FIRST ARMY FORMED: 10 AUGUST 1918 ACTIVATED: LORRAINE, FRANCE

Size, composition, and leadership of military units varied over the course of the first world war. Some units operated at 50% while others were maintained by two people: the unit historian and the unit commander. I have included the names where known as they pertain to Albert Matelena's leaders.

Adapted from: <http://www.easternct.edu/personal/faculty/pocock/ranks.htm>

Unit	Approx	Composition	Insignia	Typical Commander
Army	varied	varied		Brigadier General John J. Pershing
Corps I - V	varied	varied		I: Major General Hunter Liggett IV: Major General Joseph T. Dickman
78th Division	28,105	2 brigades, HQ, +support units		Major General James H. McRae
156th Brigade	8,000+	2 regiments, +HQ		Brigadier General James T. Dean
311th Infantry Regiment	4,000	3 battalions, +HQ		General Stokes
2nd Infantry Battalion	700	3 companies, +HQ		Major Adec
Company E	250	4 platoons, +HQ		Captain
Platoon	58	7 squads		Lieutenant
Squad	8			Staff Sergeant

APPENDIX 2: 78th Division Statistics

Front Line: 38 days on the front line in France (range 18 – 220)

17 days in Quiet sector

21 days in Active sector

Miles Advanced: 13 miles under fire (range 0 – 44.5)

The daily average is calculated as 0.62 miles advanced/each active day. In contrast, the 77th which had 44.5 miles advanced under fire in 66 active days, or 0.67 miles/day, while the 4 strongest divisions performed as follows: 1st advanced 0.34 miles/day, the 2nd had 0.57 miles/day, the 26th had 0.51 and the 42nd had 0.87. This calculation has often been misused in attempts to compare the effectiveness of divisions but, as such, it is useless as there is no accounting for terrain, enemy strength or the abilities of the division's commanders as well as their subordinates. Also absent in this calculation is the fact that 12 miles, over 90%, of this advance occurred on a single day.

Casualties: 8,282 (range 99 – 25,232) includes killed in action, wounded and evacuated for illness.

Prisoners of war captured: 432 (range 3 – 12,026); 401 according to members.nbci.com including 9 officers.

Source: Paul F. Braim, The Test of Battle.
(White Mane Publishing: Shippensburg, PA)
1988, pp. 187 – 191.

Commanding generals:

Major-General Chase W. Kennedy: 08/23/1917 – 12/27/1917

Major-General Hugh L. Scott: 12/28/1917 – 03/15/1918

Brigadier-General James T. Dean: 03/16/1918 – 04/19/1918

Major-General James H. McRae: 04/20/1918 – 11/11/1918

Source: Order of Battle, American Expeditionary Forces,
World War I, 76th- 79th Divisions
<http://members.nbci.com/jweaver300/ww1/76div.htm>

APPENDIX 3

MILITARY INSIGNIA

78TH INFANTRY DIVISION



Approved: 21 December 1971
78th Training Division
Redesignated: 1 October 1993
78th Exercise Division
Redesignated: 17 October 1999
78th Training Support Division

Description: A gold color metal and enamel device 1 3/16 inches (3.02cm) in height overall, consisting of a white enamel alerion on a scarlet enamel disc centered upon a blue enamel equilateral triangle with notched sides, all in front of two white enamel lightning flashes in a V form contained at top and bottom by a continuous scarlet scroll inscribed below with the word "AUDACITER" in gold.

Symbolism: The white alerion on scarlet is from the arms of Lorraine Province in France where the organization served in three World War I campaigns. In World War II, the unit participated in the Ardennes-Alsace, Rhineland and Central Europe campaigns indicated by the three points, in the color blue for Infantry and for the area of the Rhine River. The white flashes and the red of the scroll allude to the Division shoulder sleeve insignia.

Motto: AUDACITER
Translation: BOLDLY

78TH INFANTRY DIVISION



Approved: 27 May 1922
78th Infantry Division
Retained: 11 September 1959
78th Training Division
Redesignated: 17 October 1999
78th Training Support Division

Description: On a red semi-disc 3 inches (7.62cm) in diameter, a white bolt of lightning from sinister chief to dexter base, all within a 1/8 inch (.32cm) green border.

Symbolism: "The lightning flash on the red background alludes to the combat record of the division likened to a 'bolt of lightning...' and to its designation as the 'Lightning Division'" is the official US Army description. However the unit was known as the "White Lightning" or the "Lightning Division" before it saw any action which makes that origin suspect. A more likely origin is the known presence of the bootleg alcohol "Jersey lightning" in the area of Camp Dix. Personally, I think the lightning bolt symbolized how one's head felt the morning after!

APPENDIX 3

MILITARY INSIGNIA

311TH INFANTRY



Approved: 12 April 1922
311th Organized Reserves
Redesignated: 8 July 1960
311TH Infantry Regiment

Description: A gold colored metal and enamel device 1 1/8 inches (2.86 cm) in height overall consisting of a shield blazoned: Azure, an oak tree Or; in a chief dancette Gules fimbriated Argent three alerions of the second. Attached below the shield a red scroll turned gold inscribed "JAMAIS TROP TARD" in gold letters.

Symbolism: The shield is blue for Infantry and blue is also the color of the shield of the coat of arms of St. Mihiel. The dancette alludes to the three rocks on the coat of arms of St. Mihiel. The oak tree represents service in the Meuse-Argonne. The arms of Lorraine are "Or, on a bend Gules three alerions of the field," and the three alerions on the red chief denote service in Lorraine.

Motto: JAMAIS TROP TARD
Translation:: NEVER TOO LATE

FIRST U.S. ARMY

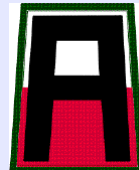


Authorized: 16 November 1918
Approved: 27 May 1922

Background: A black letter "A" was authorized as the insignia by the Commanding General, American Expedition Force and later approved by the War Department.

Symbolism: The letter "A" represents "Army" and is also the first letter of the alphabet suggesting "First Army." The red and white of the background are the colors used in flags for Armies.

On November 17, 1950, a background of equally divided horizontally white and red was added, reflecting the colors used in flags by the Armies.



PRIVATE



CHEVRON: The single chevron denotes a Private. There has been, and still is, an ongoing discussion regarding the "proper" way to wear chevrons – point up or point down. Just prior to the war the orientation had switched from a downward point to an upward one where it has remained since.



Appendix 4

Military

Medals



WORLD WAR I VICTORY MEDAL

Inscribed "The Great War For Civilization" on the reverse with Winged Liberty on the obverse. Each nation had the same ribbon from which the bronze medal hung.



BATTLE CLASPS
were awarded for each battle the soldier fought:
St. Mihiel and
Meuse-Argonne



STATE OF NEW JERSEY VICTORY MEDAL

The State of New Jersey was one of several states that issued a medal commemorating the victory of its veterans.



Reverse
"PRESENTED BY THE STATE OF
NEW JERSEY TO
ITS CITIZENS WHO SERVED IN
THE WORLD WAR."



PURPLE HEART

Had been suspended after the Civil War and reinstituted before the second World War. Veterans injured in WW I, or their descendants, had to apply for it.



Lapel and Pocket Pins
Awarded: April 15, 2000



WORLD WAR I SILVER VICTORY PIN

Issued to veterans that were wounded. A similar pin in bronze was the standard pin issued.

APPENDIX 5: FLAGS

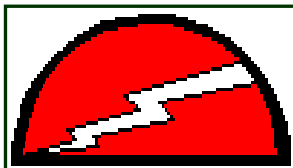
Were used to identify troops in the field as well as location of headquarters and other affiliates such as the first aid station for a particular unit.



First or "Eye" Corps



First Army Designation



78th Infantry Division



156th Infantry Brigade

I have not been able to locate any symbols or insignia for the 156th Infantry Brigade.



311th Infantry Regiment

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IS THIS THE END?

In the most obvious way, yes, this is the end....of this book. But not the end of the story. As of this writing, the New Jersey Distinguished Service Medal has been applied for from the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. This medal is awarded to Veterans of the Armed Forces that served in time of war who were residents of New Jersey upon entry into Active Duty and returned to live in New Jersey after their tour of duty.

Other records exist that have yet to be reviewed – a more extensive search in the various hospital records of the American Expeditionary Forces may yield information that is not yet known to this author. And some records are hoped to exist - records that show the individual squad movements on a daily basis have yet to be located.

So, the story will continue.....

PURPLE HEART

Army Regulation 600-8-22 issued February 25, 1995 has a description of this award that I have abbreviated, using the pertinent points:

The Purple Heart was established by General George Washington at Newburgh, New York, on 7 August 1782, during the Revolutionary War. It was reestablished by the President of the United States per War Department General Orders 3, 1932. It is awarded in the name of the President of the United States to any member of an Armed Force who was wounded while serving in one of the U.S. Armed Forces after 5 April 1917 in any action with an opposing armed force of a foreign country in which the Armed Forces of the United States were engaged.

Unique for being the sole award that is not recommended, it is the only award one is entitled to for the first wound received while at war. Subsequent awards are signified by an Oak Leaf Cluster that is worn on the ribbon of the Purple Heart.

To be eligible, a wound is defined as an injury to any body part from an outside force or agent. Injuries that clearly justify the award and that may have been relevant in the award to Albert, include injury by enemy bullet, shrapnel or other projectile and injury caused by enemy released chemical, biological, or nuclear agent. Any person who fought in World War I and was entitled to wear wound chevrons are eligible. Albert was entitled to wear "two service chevrons" pursuant to Company Order No. 7, dated 19 May 1919 at Pouillenay, France. This order has yet to be located, but it may refer to the same chevrons as found in the Purple Heart eligibility requirements.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Brian Smith is a world-renowned astrophysicist who masquerades as a chiropractor by day. His specialized area of study is the impact of the prion, nuon, peon and quorum on the astral-physical aspects of the space-time continuum. By warping the woof of the very fabric of space, he has discovered the secrets to.....life itself? No, that's for another day...besides the answer is 42 as we all know courtesy of Ford Prefect.Time and space travel. Huh? You know: "...he has discovered the secrets to" ...Time and space travel. While this may seem a rather big 'yawn' to some of you, this biographical account would not be possible without this discovery. For, even though it appears that the story was written from a



LOOK FOR THESE EXCITING FORTHCOMING TITLES:

distance in both time and space, it was not. After a hard day at the office making the lame walk, the sick healthy and the stupid go away, the author would time travel (and space travel too – not many exciting things happened in August of 1918 in Los Angeles, let alone exciting things to someone he knows!). What? Do you think all these intricate little details found within these pages are in a library or archives somewhere? Fat chance! While searching for the perfect Brownie recipe, he stumbled into Paris in August 1918 and, while the recipe eluded him, decided to use his time there wisely....he went to see the Allied Supreme Commander Ferdinand Foch and told him "Look, believe me, you want to win this war or not? Do this, do this, do this...no, I did not say do that, I said do this! And victory will be yours by, oh, I don't know, Armistice Day?" And, up in a puff of logic, he disappeared – to return to write this amazing first-hand account of how he won the First World War – and he did it without the perfect brownie!

- THE FIRST WORLD WAR, PART TWO: A spell-binding account of the 3910th Signal Service Corps during World War II.
- WHY MY GREAT-GRANDFATHER FROM ITALY HAD RED HAIR: A look at southern Italy from the earliest of times – with a focus on the town of Piedimonte d'Alife. Learn who ruled and when -- it'll give you something to discuss at those boring office parties.
- WHY I LOVE NEW JERSEY: A family/history/biographical journey through the Garden State from before its earliest European residents through several centuries after they arrived...

BUT DON'T LOOK FOR THEM TOO SOON!!

How American Press Announced Signing of Peace Treaty

THIS IS "DER TAG"

GERMANY WAKES OUT
OF DREAM OF EMPIRE
GREATEST WAR IN HISTORY OF THE

Evening Times

PEACE

WASHINGTON, D. C., SEPTEMBER 28
SIGN TREATY

Friede
der Weltkrieg

PREMIER CLERMONT AU
FRENCH DEPUTIES

CONQUERED GERMANS SIGN

EXTRA

TREATY

PEACE SIGNED

PRESIDENT WILSON'S (CHARGED) MESSAGE TO
THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

"The treaty of peace has been signed. It is a peaceful and
wise and more constructive of the future it will
provide the basis for a new order of affairs in the world.
It is a peace treaty in the sense and spirit of the
treaties of 1763 and 1812, but it is a peace treaty which
does by Germany are in the highest and noblest. It brings
ending this European century and the new regime
negotiated standing in the world by the groups and individuals
millions of its terms. And it is peace more than a treaty
of peace with Germany. It is a peace treaty which is
a treaty supported by the people of the world.
It recognizes the inalienable rights of humanity, the
rights of conscience and the dignity of religious belief
and practice. It is in the true sense that I have
spoken of it as a great charter for a new order of affairs.
There is ground here for deep satisfaction, universal
reconciliation, and confident hope."

Bringing War to an End
Formalities at Versailles
in Message Urges Acceptance

TREATY SIGNED

GERMANS AFFIX SIGNATURES
TO COMPACT IN PRESENCE
OF ENVOYS FROM 28 NATIONS

WAR FORMALLY
END WHEN 26 NATIONS
APPROVE THE DOCUMENT

Friedensschluss

KING GEORGE'S ADDRESS TO
THE BRITISH PEOPLE

"The signing of the peace treaty will
be a great day for the British people.
It will mark the end of the European
war which has brought so much
suffering and sorrow to the world.
It will mark the beginning of a new
era of peace and goodwill.
I am sure that the British people
will be proud to accept the terms
of the treaty and to work for the
maintenance of peace in the future."

GERMAN DREAM OF WORLD
CONTROL ENDS AS TEUTON
AGENTS SIGN PEACE PACT

World War Ends

Ovation

ENDS THE GREAT WAR;
DEPART STILL PROTESTING;

PEACE SIGNED

